

A SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS TELEVISION BROADCASTING IN THE
LOS ANGELES METROPOLITAN AREA AND PROPOSALS FOR
CHANGE: NEW STRATEGIES FOR MAINLINE CHURCHES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	viii
FOREWORD	xii
Purpose	xiv
Background	xiv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. COMMERCIAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING IN LOS ANGELES	8
PROGRAM ANALYSES ON UHF STATIONS	9
Channel 40	10
Enjoying Marriage	10
Teach us to Pray	13
Charismatic Theology	15
Let's Just Praise the Lord	17
Channel 30	22
PROGRAM ANALYSES, VHF STATIONS: COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS	25
PTL Club	25
Day of Discovery	26
It Is Written	27
Amazing Prophecy News	27
Church in the Home	28
A Better Life	29
GENERAL REFLECTIONS	30
Timing and Audience	30
Program Content	31

Chapter	Page
III. MAINLINE CHURCHES AND PUBLIC SERVICE	
BROADCASTING	33
RELIGION IN MEDIA	35
PROGRAM ANALYSES	39
Dimensions--KABC (Channel 7)	39
Belief--KNXT (Channel 2)	41
Today's Religion--KNXT (Channel 2)	42
Odyssey--KNBC (Channel 4)	44
Unit VI--KTTV (Channel 11)	46
GENERAL REFLECTIONS	47
IV. MAINLINE CHURCHES AND RIM: A STRATEGY	
THAT FAILED	54
THE STRUCTURE OF RIM--THE VISION	54
THE DETERIORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RIM AND THE ORGANIZED RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY: THE DENOMINATIONS' SIDE OF THE STORY	57
THE DETERIORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RIM AND THE ORGANIZED RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY: RIM'S SIDE OF THE STORY	61
THE ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY OF RELIGION IN MEDIA	62
Illustration #1	63
Illustration #2	64
Illustration #3	65
Illustration #4	66
V. ATTEMPTS TO SALVAGE RIM AND THE CREATION OF ECUMEDIA	68
The Development of a Written Statement of Goals for RIM	68
Efforts to Rewrite the By-Laws of RIM	70
1977: The Council of Churches Takes Another Look at Mass Media	75
The Council of Churches Submits Proposal to RIM	81
RIM's Response to the Council's Proposal	83
New Media Consortium Created--ECUMEDIA	85
General Reflections	88

Chapter	Page
VI. FUTURE BROADCAST STRATEGIES FOR THE LOS ANGELES RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY	91
Rationale for Program Content	92
Rationale for Program Style	94
VII. PROPOSALS FOR PROGRAMMING	99
TREATMENT FOR A PROPOSED THIRTEEN-WEEK TELEVISION SERIES: A	99
Background	99
Topics to Be Covered	104
Other Considerations	116
TREATMENT FOR A PROPOSED THIRTEEN-WEEK TELEVISION SERIES: B	117
Background	117
Proposed Interviews	120
Other Considerations	123
TREATMENT FOR A PROPOSED THIRTEEN-WEEK TELEVISION SERIES: C	124
Background	124
Topics	128
Other Considerations	136
VIII. CONCLUDING UNSCIENTIFIC POSTSCRIPT:	
WHAT HAS HOLLYWOOD TO DO WITH JERUSALEM?.	138
WHAT IS JERUSALEM?	138
WHAT IS HOLLYWOOD?	143
WHAT HAS HOLLYWOOD TO DO WITH JERUSALEM?.	148
Media and Gospel	149
Media and Church	151
Corporate Strategies Necessary	153
Conclusion	157

APPENDIX	160
A. John Dart, "Vast Gap in Doctrine: Did Jesus Rise Bodily? Most Scholars Say No," <u>Los Angeles Times</u>	161
B. "Did Jesus Rise Bodily? Most Scholars Say No," Letter to Editor, <u>Los Angeles Times</u> , by Pat Boone	164
C. Proposal for an Office of Mass Media of the Southern California Council of Churches	165
D. Description of the Religious Radio-TV-Film Association of Southern California	168
E. By-Laws . . . of the Religious Radio-Television-Film Association of Southern California	169
F. By-Laws . . . of the Religious Radio*Television*Film Association of Southern California [Revised]	172
G. Dan L. Thrapp, "Group Aims to Put Religion in Mass Media," <u>Los Angeles Times</u>	174
H. RIM Banquet Program	175
I. Statement of Concern with Letter from J. Irwin Trotter to Directors of RIM	176
J. RIM Cash Budget, April 20, 1978	177
K. 1977 RIM Awards Banquet Budget	180
L. Letters of Transmittal	181
M. Proposal of the Council of Churches of Southern California	183
N. Ecumedia Proposal with Covering Letter from J. Irwin Trotter	184

EXHIBITS	187
A. Introducing Religion in Media	188
B. RIM Program Logs	192
C. RIM Annual Report	194

ABSTRACT

This project has been carried on under the auspices of the Doctor of Ministry Program at the School of Theology at Claremont, California. The project summarizes findings and proposals carried out over a two and one-half year period, during which time the author served as Director of Communications for the Pacific and Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church.

There are four major thrusts to the project.

I. Program monitoring and analysis. During the course of the project the author monitored most of the religious television programs broadcast in the Los Angeles area. Typical programs are reviewed and critiqued from the standpoint of contemporary theology in mainline denominations.

II. Evaluation of existing broadcast strategies by the Southern California Council of Churches. At the beginning of the project, the Council and its member denominations were represented by a council-related, but independent corporation, Religion-in-Media (RIM), as broker for public service time and representative to the media industry. The deterioration and eventual dissolution of relationships between the conciliar denominations and RIM are traced, and efforts to avoid the break in the relationship are described.

III. Description of the process by which a new media coalition was created. The development of a new media strategy by the mainline denominations of Los Angeles is traced, and the creation of a new media consortium (ECUMEDIA) is outlined. Included are working documents which were crucial to the formation of the new agency. New communications priorities have recently emerged among the mainline denominations, and their impact on future media strategies is suggested, along with a theological rationale for future relationships between the church and the broadcast industry.

IV. New programming proposals. Models for future television efforts by the mainline denominations are outlined in "treatments" for three new programs. These treatments address the shortcomings of current programming and seek to build on the current priorities of the mainline churches.

During the period of this research, a number of unexpected needs and problems have surfaced. The proposals contained herein are efforts to expand and improve the current impact of the mainline denominations through the television broadcast medium.

Proposals for resourcing the creative community should offer new insights from the church in prime-time programming. Resourcing can provide greater visibility for the concerns of the churches.

Proposals for monitoring of program content and management practices will reflect community concerns which are shared with many citizens' groups in Los Angeles and throughout the country. Monitoring will represent the churches' commitments in the industry.

Proposals for new "public service" programs should help to clarify the identity of the mainline churches and interpret their concerns to the larger community. New programming which reflects more accurately who we are and where we are could reinforce our teaching and preaching and be a stimulus for evangelism and outreach.

If the scope of the project is large, the methodology has been quite personal.

The author viewed, analyzed and reviewed countless hours of television broadcasts.

The organizational material deals with the results of two years of meetings with others who had denominational communications responsibilities, as well as the Board of Directors of RIM and communications officers of several major denominations.

The development of ideas for new programming is based on interviews with radio and television executives, as well as successful writers, producers and directors.

The final philosophical and theological statements are based on comments and suggestions by several

leading theologians, as well as more than twenty years experience as a media-watcher and a minister of the United Methodist Church.

FOREWORD

When I was growing up in Texas every student talent show would include at least one parody of religious broadcasting. The most common went something like this: "Remember friends, there is too much commercialization of religion! And if you will send me ten dollars and the cover off your Bible, I will send you ABSOLUTELY FREE my new book on the subject. Just send it to me in care of station G-A-W-D, Del Ree-O, Texas." In the early 1950's there was some accuracy in the parody.

In the early 60's the so-called religious broadcasting on Los Angeles television offered a diet which was little different: "Dr." O. L. Jagers . . . with Miss Velma Mary Lou reading the letters. Jagers would open each broadcast with a series of mind-boggling questions: "Will Russia invade the United States? Will an earthquake destroy our city next week? Does she . . . or doesn't she?" Dr. Jagers would answer the questions, referring to a collection of some fifteen various versions of the Bible, many written in tongues more esoteric than I had seen offered in any seminary curriculum. Many mainline church people would tune in, just to see what he would think up next. Sunday evening offered fascinating insights into televised religion with O. L. and Velma Mary Lou.

In the mid-70's so-called "religious" broadcasting has ceased to be a joke. It is now studied as a harbinger of serious sociological implications. Theologians like Harvey Cox watch the Jagers and a host of other "religious" t.v. personalities for clues about the nature of the culture and trends within the society. Growing networks of "Christian" broadcasters are springing up in all parts of the country. They may indeed reflect the nature of certain segments of the society. More importantly, they will certainly influence other segments of the culture.

These networks and the individuals involved in religious broadcasting are drawn almost entirely from the ultraconservative end of the religious spectrum. The key words are charismatic, spirit-filled, born-again, and fundamental. The major thrust of the programming involves the double-whammy of salvation (via Christ's atoning blood) and healing (via a wide variety of exorcisms and exorcists).

The theology is simplistic and self-centered. It frequently is aimed at undercutting the mainline churches through derision and ridicule. It is not uncommon for broadcasters to wrap themselves in a jingoistic kind of patriotism reflecting the idolatry of nation-worship.

If these were lone voices coming out of Del Rio, Texas, in the middle of the night, they might be

discounted; however, they are in almost every metropolitan area, twenty-four hours a day, many on channels which exclude all but the charismatic from their programming.

Purpose

It is the purpose of this project to review what is taking place in so-called religious television broadcasting in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, to assess the effectiveness of the mainline denominations in the television broadcasting field, and to propose specific changes which may lead to programs which more nearly reflect the commitments and concerns of the mainline Protestant churches of Los Angeles.

Background

By way of background, I should note that television broadcasting has been an interest for a number of years. However, during the course of my Doctor of Ministry studies the entire field of communications has become a major focus of attention. Studies with William Fore, James Wall, and Steve Jackson, all involved in my D.Min. program, have heightened my concern and provided unusual opportunities for dialogue and growth.

In addition, about half-way through my D.Min. program, I moved vocationally from the local church pastorate to work as Director of Communications for the

Pacific Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church. The vocational change has provided an opportunity to examine first-hand, and work professionally in, a field which had previously been simply an avocation.

One of my assignments with the Annual Conference has been to represent the Conference on the Board of Directors of the Religion in Media Association (RIM). This organization has been the conduit through which the major denominations relate to mass media in Los Angeles. A major aspect of the project will examine RIM in its role as representative of denominational bodies.

The project will utilize both theoretical and practical disciplines. Theological and Biblical criteria will be applied to programming content. The practical disciplines of organizational development and communications theory will be applied to the structures of RIM and new program development. Ethical criteria will be applied in suggesting new patterns of media relationships.

I am particularly grateful to the members of the Woodland Hills United Methodist Church for their encouragement in undertaking the In-Service D.Min. program, to my wife and family for the sharing of their time, and to my long-time friend, Cari Glover, for typing countless manuscripts through the years.

The conclusion of the project, stated briefly here, is that religious broadcasting has not come very

far since those days when Del Rio was the center of the pentacostal world. But it is no longer a laughing matter. The time has come for the mainline church to assess the impact of television and to create new strategies for relating to the broadcast industry. This issue will require more than an emotional response. Proposed action will demand a commitment of funds and personnel. As will be shown, the charismatics have made this commitment already, and we are now almost a decade behind them in the development of a comprehensive broadcast strategy.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

William F. Fore, Assistant General Secretary for Communication of the National Council of Churches, states the position of most communications professionals in Protestantism when he says that churches have no business in production and programming.¹ According to Fore, production of programs requires both expertise and funds on a scale not available to the religious community. In addition, he notes that much of what has passed for "religious" programming has been either bad preaching or the literal reproduction of Biblical narratives: the well-known "bathrobe" drama of the chancel aimed at a larger audience through broadcast technology.

Everett Parker of the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ agrees. Parker is convinced that the best way for the churches to be involved in broadcasting is by monitoring programs, goading others into seeking better quality, and actively influencing the policies of broadcasters regarding both program content and management practices.²

¹William F. Fore, "Religious Images in Mass Media," lecture at Pacific School of Religion, 1975.

²Everett Parker, "Mass Media Councils: Citizen

Fore and Parker are two of the foremost spokespersons for the church in the area of mass media. Fore, through the National Council of Churches, has been able to influence mass media in dramatic ways. Under his leadership the N.C.C. decided to honor secular films such as "Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf" and "The Pawnbroker." By recognizing and paying tribute to important secular works of art, the N.C.C. has contributed to the encouragement of serious artists to treat relevant themes with honesty and integrity.

Parker, working with citizens' groups throughout the country, has successfully managed to challenge broadcasters whose employment practices or whose programming failed to regard the broad spectrum of the community. Television station WLBT in Jackson, Mississippi, lost its license to a citizens' group as a result of Parker's pioneering efforts. The station had refused to employ racial minorities or to provide programming related to the interests of minorities in Jackson. In Red Lion, Pennsylvania, Parker achieved a landmark victory over Carl McIntire by securing a mandate for responses to McIntire's religiopolitical forays over the airwaves.

The airwaves are a public trust, regulated by the

Power for Better Broadcasting," lecture in Los Angeles, 1976.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Both Parker and Fore believe that the best role for the religious community is to monitor the stewardship of that trust, and to act as guarantors of its enforcement. There is little question as to the validity of their concerns. Most Protestants in the field of communications would endorse the monumental contributions which they have made.

Nevertheless, within the past few years there have been new and rapidly escalating developments in the field of "religious" broadcasting. Entire networks have been developed, using UHF signals, and broadcasting as "educational stations." Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN) and Christian Broadcast Network (CBN) are but two of these. In addition, countless individuals and organizations are now engaged in production of videotaped materials for syndication on both VHF and UHF stations throughout the country and around the world.

In spite of the fact that it is "too expensive," small groups have managed to get into production. As early as 1961 there was only one small station devoted to fundamentalist television. The 700 Club, which is now broadcast in some four hundred cities in the United States, and (via satellite) in Europe, Asia, and South America, began on that station in Portsmouth, North Carolina, with an appeal by a southern evangelist for seven

hundred people to pledge ten dollars per month to get him on the air.³ The P.T.L. Club (Praise the Lord, or People That Love) began on a small southern California UHF station in 1972. Today P.T.L. boasts a weekly audience potential of fifty million, and a weekly income averaging \$1.2 million. TBN, Los Angeles Channel 40, which began operations in southern California in 1973, has been granted licenses in Phoenix, Seattle, Denver, Houston, Oklahoma City and Hawaii. The network also boasts a satellite capability for overseas broadcasts.

In Los Angeles alone, more than one hundred "religious" programs are shown weekly, and because of reruns there are usually two or three broadcast at any given time, day or night. Television does influence values, behavior and decision-making by the viewing public. In well-documented studies, the Office of the Surgeon General of the United States has stated that television violence does cause aggressive behavior on the part of viewers.⁴ In 1976, advertisers spent more than six billion dollars on t.v. commercials; they believe in the capacity of the media to effect specific decisions by viewers.

³Atlanta Constitution and Journal Magazine (October 3, 1976), 39.

⁴"Television and Social Behaviour," Surgeon General's Report to Congress (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972).

And television has lots of viewers. According to the Television Information Office, there are t.v. sets in seventy million homes in the United States (95.5 percent in the entire nation).⁵ Almost half the homes have more than one set. According to the authors of Television Awareness Training,⁶ "The average home is lighted by the t.v. screen 6½ hours a day--more than 2200 hours a year."

It is not surprising that the Roper Organization shows that 64 percent of the population gets most of its news about the world from t.v. and 68 percent gets most of its information about national elections (candidates and issues) from the same source. According to Merchandising Week, the public is now spending some five billion dollars annually for t.v. sets, with a total investment of more than sixty-five billion dollars already made in home viewing equipment. Again, according to Roper, if there were conflicting reports on the same news story, 51 percent would believe televised stories, as compared with 22 percent for newspapers, the nearest competition. Given these statistics, the church must face the question: "What image of the church is projected on t.v. and what is the impact?"

⁵"Changing Public Attitudes Toward Television and Other Mass Media" (New York: Roper Organization, Inc., 1977).

⁶Media Action Research Center, 1977.

The potency of the visual medium is well accepted in most church groups. The United Methodist Church has joined the Church of the Brethren, the United Church of Christ and the Media Action Research Center in an effort to monitor and alter current programming trends. These groups share the conviction that racial and sexual stereotypes, portrayed on television, reinforce negative aspects of human behavior. Other concerns in T-A-T include the effect of televised violence, advertising, depicting "news as entertainment" and the effects of t.v. on children. The United Methodist Women and the National Organization of the P.T.A. have also recently become involved in the same kind of concerns. Those who watch t.v.-watchers are convinced that the medium has power over its viewers.

For this reason the images of religion, projected on the television screen, will be of concern to the religious community. The entire spectrum of the community of faith is being interpreted to the masses of viewers by one small segment of the church.

On the television screen, the mainline church is almost invisible. "Church," as defined by television, means evangelicals and charismatics, faith-healers and hustlers. Nothing in this paper will assert that those viewpoints should be removed from the airwaves or that they have no right to space. Rather, this is intended

to demonstrate the need for a broader interpretation of the religious community--in its diversity, as well as its multiple concerns and commitments.

CHAPTER II

COMMERCIAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING IN LOS ANGELES

There are three identifiable sources of religious broadcasting in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Two UHF stations, Channel 30 (KHOF) and Channel 40 (KLXA), present a continuous broadcast pattern of conservative religious programming. In addition to the UHF stations, each of the seven VHF stations carries at least one of two kinds of religious broadcasting: commercial or public service programs.

Commercial religious broadcasting is a major communications industry. Many programs are syndicated for release in multiple market areas; others are shown over several different stations in the same area each week. For example, "Day of Discovery," produced by the Radio Bible Class, is shown in Los Angeles on different stations at three different times each Sunday: Channel 9 at 7:30 a.m., Channel 5 at 11:30 a.m., and Channel 5 at 10:00 p.m. Rex Humbard is shown at 8:00 a.m. on Channel 13, at 11:00 a.m. on Channel 9, and at 9:00 p.m. on Channel 13--also on Sunday.

Jimmy Swaggart, a singing, healing evangelist, is one of the most enthusiastic programmers, appearing on Channel 5 Sundays at 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. In

addition, Swaggart is on Channel 40 Sundays at 3:30 p.m., Mondays at 12:30 p.m., and Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. He is also found on Channel 30 at 9:30 p.m. Sundays and 9:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

The ubiquitous Robert Schuller may appear as many as five times weekly. He is currently seen on Channel 5 at least once each week and on Channel 40 on two different occasions. The program is called "Hour of Power." His warning is: "Negative people have taken over"; his prescription, "The Peak to Peak Principle."

Among the most popular shows are those described as televised "prayer meetings": The "700 Club," the "PTL Club," "Praise the Lord," and "Let's Just Praise the Lord." These feature guest evangelists, singing groups, telephone "counselors," and prayers for healing those who call in for help. "The 700 Club" is shown weekdays in Los Angeles on Channel 5. "The PTL Club" is shown twice daily on Channel 30, as well as weekday mornings on Channel 9. "Let's Just Praise the Lord," shown three times each day on Channel 40, is a two and one-half hour marathon of prayer, music, and interviews, and the show constitutes the backbone of programming in this "educational" station.

PROGRAM ANALYSES ON UHF STATIONS

Two major UHF outlets in the Los Angeles

metropolitan area, licensed by the FCC for educational purposes, are under the sole control and ownership of charismatic religious groups. Indeed, air time on these stations is sold only to groups or individuals which are charismatic in nature. A thorough review of programming on these stations will make it clear that the stations are indeed educational in nature; they provide an education in pentacostal religion. The program log includes sections devoted to education on intercessory prayer, education on praise, education on family matters, and education in charismatic theology.

Channel 40

Channel 40 provides some eighteen hours of programming daily, using reruns of previously shown material in "shifts." That is, a segment of "Let's Just Praise the Lord" may appear three times in the same day. Without going into detail about all the shows, the following analysis will provide a sample of the regulars, as to theological and sociological stance. Random viewing offered the following synopses.

Enjoying Marriage. Reverend Ron and Betty Wiseman are hosts of the show "Enjoying Marriage." Wiseman is pastor of the Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. In an opening statement Rev. Wiseman notes that the Bible

enjoins us to submit to authority; therefore, he says, obey the government, pay your taxes, observe traffic laws and "natural laws." These "laws" are given by God for our protection, according to Wiseman, citing scripture. For example, if you are stopped for speeding, give thanks. The Lord has acted to protect you from dangerous driving.

Parallels in marriage might be ulcers and headaches, which will likely occur if the doctrine of submission is not observed. To guarantee a joyful marriage (and presumably avoid headaches and ulcers as well), the wife should submit to the husband. The husband, in turn, must submit to Christ.

To accentuate the point of the sermon, Betty Wiseman introduces a young couple who are learning the meaning of submission. According to their interview they began marriage regarding one another as equals. However, they testify that the egalitarian approach was divisive, and they found that "equal rights do not work." When a husband and wife are equal, they may find serious disagreements on matters such as interior decorating and whether or not the wife should work.

Under the tutelage of Rev. and Mrs. Wiseman the "guest couple" learned the lessons of submission. She gave up her dreams of going to work and her views on decorating the home. The young husband testifies to a

new feeling of vocation and purpose as he assumes the role of "family boss" and leader, though he admits to delegating authority to his wife on occasion. Both husband and wife are college-educated young adults in their late twenties.

"Enjoying Marriage" is a fairly typical example of the way in which educational programs on Channel 40 fail to educate. The program provides simplistic answers to serious human problems, based on a literal interpretation of the Bible. There is no attempt to deal with the ambiguities of any given issue. There is no mention that, even in scriptures, unjust authorities are condemned and overturned.

There is no opportunity to question the relationship of persons to authorities and/or authoritarian institutions. Apparently to question any authority would open the gates to questions about the authority of the church, the authority of the scriptures, and even the authority of one's personal religious experience.

The program does not invite dialogue with the scriptures, or even the opportunity to see portions of the Bible in dialogue with other portions. Bible Study on Channel 40 means seizing on a text and taking it to its logical conclusion, without regard to other passages of scripture, other resources in faith or tradition, or other human experiences.

Indeed, the thrust of "Enjoying Marriage" appears to discount other major thrusts of the New Testament, i.e., those which have given rise to certain portions of the "woman's movement" and which emphasize personal freedom, independence, or an interdependence between persons. If you are interested in "Enjoying Marriage," submission is the key; let the wife submit to the husband and the husband submit to Christ.

Teach us to Pray. Another educational adventure in Channel 40's curriculum is "Teach us to Pray." The instructor, Rev. Jack Haywood, pastor of The Church on the Way, Van Nuys, California, specializes in intercessory prayer. On some occasions, he teaches prayer by praying himself, then reviewing his prayers with the t.v. audience. He will point out that in the midst of prayer, God caused him to think of a family who warranted his attention. God will do that when he wants someone to pray for a specific person, he maintains. Such intercessors are necessary if God's will is to be done.

In dealing with the premises of prayer, Rev. Haywood notes that God has ordained a plan for us and that it will be fulfilled. Nevertheless, he says that the plan has been designed in such a way that it can only be fulfilled as human beings act to guarantee its fulfillment. The first time around, Adam failed in carrying

out the foreordained plan, but that only serves to explain the necessity of Christ: the second Adam. The plan was reinstated by God, through the ministry of Christ, and humankind has been given another opportunity to fulfill God's plan. Prayer is the leverage which humans use on God to help get God's will accomplished.

It would probably only seem facetious to note Jesus' instructions regarding prayer, but at least the privacy and simplicity which he emphasized may be noted. The other premises of "Teach us to Pray" may bear further scrutiny. One cannot help but be sympathetic to Haywood's picture of a God whose hands are tied until it occurs to someone to ask him to do what he has had in mind doing since the creation of the earth. God, as pictured by Haywood, is both earnest and pathetic; disappointed by Adam (unless, of course, he foreordained Adam's Fall) and waiting painfully until humankind finally guesses which prayers he has foreordained they should pray. This God appears to be helplessly waiting to do good things, waiting for the faithful to discover what is expected of them, and to respond with intercession.

All the above adds up to a nice trick. It is possible to convince oneself that there is a correlation between "thy will be done" and "whatever comes to mind." If the premise is accepted that whatever comes to mind

only "comes" because God has put it there, the intercessor will have no difficulties. Finally, there is some incongruity in his picture of a God who cannot act or do anything unless it is requested by an "intercessor."

None of the above even begins to broach a dialogue over the nature of God or prayer. In Channel 40's wide array of religious leaders and theologians there is no indication of any diversity within the theological spectrum of any kind. The only diversity acknowledged is between those who are "spirit-filled" and those who are not.

Charismatic Theology. Perhaps one of the better illustrations of the last point will be found in a program entitled "Charismatic Theology." "Charismatic Theology" is presented weekdays on Channel 40 by the "Melodyland School of Theology," a center for training charismatics (if that is not itself a contradiction in terms). The "school" is located in Anaheim, California.

Dr. J. Rodman Williams appears in a classroom setting with a group of students. One of the students is asked to share a research paper on the meaning of "spirit-filled." The student compares passages of scripture in which the phrase appears and cites references from charismatic scholars on the subject, concluding that when a person is once-filled he or she may not be filled

again: (the "once-filled, always-filled" doctrine). There is general consensus, however, that one might get one's "tank topped" from time to time.

Rodman speaks from the vantage point of one who was not always spirit-filled. Therefore, he is able to point out the clear superiority of life in the spirit without, however, showing anything more than disdain for those who have not seen the light.

Dr. Rodman encourages questions from the class, but, in fact, only entertains one question, using it as an excuse for an extended monologue. The major concern of the monologue is healing, and the major prerequisite for healing is prayer. In all fairness, it should be pointed out that Rodman does not eschew medicine; rather, he is concerned that prayer be given the first priority in the healing process.

Charismatic theology is an insider's game. In order to play, each participant must agree to a set of ground rules (premises) which include the infallibility of the scriptures and the priority of Biblical revelation over reason, experience, and tradition. In the paper describing possession of the Holy Spirit, such well-known theologians as Howard Irwin and Thomas Dunn are cited. Although Irwin and Dunn are in some apparent conflict on the interpretation of this particular passage, there is no doubt that they are both on the same side of the

larger questions of Biblical inerrancy and the charismatic experience. In other words, outsiders are not permitted to play. There is no dialogue with the world; there is none with noncharismatic theology, and there is very little in the classroom.

"Charismatic Theology" serves as a forum for the delivery of partisan viewpoints; it does not serve as a marketplace for the free expression of ideas, much less the presentation or resolution of differing perspectives. It is "educational" television only to the extent that viewers may be educated about a single point of view. It is, in short, propaganda.

Let's Just Praise the Lord. "Let's Just Praise the Lord" is the most widely shown program on Channel 40. The show appears three times each day for two and one-half hours at a time. Daytime shows appear to be reruns of the previous evening, but they could be taped versions of shows which have appeared at any given time.

Hosts Jan and Paul Crouch interview guests, usually visiting evangelists and/or gospel-singers. There is a vocal group to liven things up with musical interludes. A raft of telephone counsellors is shown talking with callers throughout the show. Viewers are encouraged to phone in during the telecast to report conversions or healings and to request special prayers.

The studio is furnished like a living room with overstuffed chairs and couches, and the impression is warm and comfortable. Paul Crouch gives the appearance of having studied Dennis Weaver's speech patterns and mannerisms: at once suave and homey, the network executive and child of the spirit.

The Crouches are familiar faces throughout the program day. They appear in an ad for a tour of the Holy Land, promising "We'll baptize you in the Jordan"; on other occasions, they will visit with stagehands about their conversions or about some marvelous funeral they have attended: "Paul made such a powerful witness that many of those attending were saved. Praise the Lord."

On "Let's Just Praise the Lord" the Crouches are sympathetic interviewers, enthusiastic advocates and able promoters. They give the impression of wanting to help people, but they are at the same time maudlin in their unself-conscious expressions of superiority. For example, they continually maintain that they could do nothing for the Lord without the help of their partners (supporters) in the television audience. But Jan also constantly refers to them as our "little" partners.

In announcing plans for a "mission" to Haiti, she first expresses her concern for the "heathen" people they will visit. Next she prays for all the "little"

heathens. The attitude of superiority is consistent with feelings of guests on the show. There is a constant self-assuredness in their testimony and witness. Visiting evangelists are cocky, arrogant, and authoritarian. They appear to feel superior to those they profess to want to serve; they also appear arrogant toward God. They often will "command" or "order" God to cause a healing. And the telephones ring with testimonies of success.

One visiting evangelist (Rev. Ken Copeland from Texas) placed his hands on Paul; Paul placed his hands on Jan, and Jan advised viewers to place their hands "wherever they hurt" during the prayers for healing. Copeland then described the various ailments which he could sense were present in the television audience: everything from a diseased kidney to a flow of blood. Within minutes of the completion of the prayers, viewers were calling in to confirm the presence of those illnesses, as well as to testify to their disappearance. Sometimes Jan will giggle; sometimes she will cry. Her elation knows no bounds. She and Paul are helping serve the "little" people out there. So let's just praise the Lord!

There is an occasional dark cloud on the horizon; someone will write to say that they have not been healed yet. These letters may be "plants" to set up a reaction from a guest or they may be genuine. Copeland uses letters like this as an opportunity to let the viewers

know the need for real faith. Real faith is the faith which believes healing has occurred even when it hasn't, according to the Texan. If you believe that you've been healed, you have been healed. Once you begin to think that you may not have been healed, you will find that you haven't, because your faith was of insufficient power or duration.

"Let's Just Praise the Lord" is joyfully described by the Crouches as the "largest prayer meeting" in the world. The PTL Club and the 700 Club might argue that point, but no one can argue that it is a going and growing concern. The appeal may be in the hopes for healing. It may lie in a sympathetic audience of viewers conditioned to expect what they are seeing. The growing charismatic movement, with its superstars Pat Boone, Dean Jones, and other celebrities, is both the root and reinforcement of this programming.

There is no recognition of ambiguities in faith and healing, and there is no questioning of a charismatic's power to influence God through prayer. Prayer is simply a device to make certain that spirit-filled people get their way. After all, aren't they entitled to it?

Somehow all this seems a bit far from "thy kingdom come, thy will be done." And it appears to ignore another Biblical truth: "the rain falls on the just and the unjust--the sun shines on good and bad alike." But

the Crouches and their friends apparently see no contradiction. Nor is there any indication that they or anyone on Channel 40 sense the "Catch 22" irony of Copeland's comments that you're not healed if you don't believe you are, whether you are or not.

God is not simply the great physician; God is Alladin's genii; whether the problem is an ulcer or a harelip, "ask, and ye shall receive." The household of faith is not a band of disciples, a group of friends, or even co-workers who are equals. The world is made up of the superstars and the "little" people, the "little" partners, and the "little" heathen.

There is an absence of any indication that such views of faith and healing may, inappropriately, create intense guilt in the viewer. Those who grant the premises of the show may pray for the healing of friends or relatives, only to be told that someone died or failed to heal because of their lack of faith. While a program like this may be a "blessing" to some and an entertainment to others, those who are made to feel responsible for the tragedy in a loved one's life will view it as a curse.

This is a dangerous show; it should be rated "For Mature Audiences Only."

Channel 30

UHF Channel 30 presents a somewhat less conventional approach to religious programming. While Channel 40 is orderly, with a semblance of thought to designing a coherent program log, Channel 30 appears to be haphazard in this respect. Announced programs may fail to appear at the designated time and may not appear at all.

Five separate attempts to monitor programming on Channel 30 all met with the same results: the "Festival of Faith" was shown whether scheduled or not. "Festival of Faith" appears to be primarily a fund-raising effort, conducted by the Rev. Dr. Gene Scott.

Channel 30 is operated by the Faith Center of Glendale, and Scott is the pastor of the church. Faith Center owns broadcasting equipment and leases time to other religious broadcasters whose orientation is consistent with the tenets of the Center itself. Scott has been pastor-director of the Center for three years.

The story will be familiar to regular viewers of Channel 30. Scott came to Faith Center on a consultant basis some four years ago when the Center encountered deep financial problems. According to Scott, the previous management (pastor?) had used more than three million dollars from trust funds to build the television ministry of Faith Center. Trustors, in apparent disagreement with

the administration of his predecessor, called for their funds and threw the station (Center?) into a financial morass.

After reviewing the situation, Scott agreed to take over. In order to achieve needed debt-retirement and operating liquidity, Scott claims that he must raise ten thousand dollars daily through off-the-air contributions. The "Festival of Faith" is his daily attempt to raise these funds.

The program is mainly focused on Scott, who tells his plight. He described the attorneys in the litigation as "sick"--vultures who are only interested in their fees. His own position is described as noble: a commitment to pay off lenders one hundred cents on the dollar, as opposed to the 10 percent they might have collected if the station had gone into bankruptcy. His mission is to keep the station on the air to deliver the Word of God. The financial appeals are interspersed with readings of scripture, a choral group, some homespun homilies, and telephone calls from viewers. Occasionally, letters are read in support of the cause.

Scott's monologues include vivid descriptions of the friends who have betrayed him, as well as other evangelists who no longer come to his aid. He describes the way in which he himself has been mistreated in his endeavors and the "fat cats" who have called their notes.

Viewers take up the banter; a letter, read on the air on August 29, 1977, said: "Give it to those fat cats!" The first attempt to monitor this show was at 4:30 p.m. on August 17, 1977. Scott was just beginning his fascinating speech. At 10:30 p.m. a second attempt to monitor the programming was made, and Scott was making the same speech. However, by 10:30 p.m., he had raised more than \$4,000, with \$5,680 yet to go on his daily quota of \$10,000.

The station has an FM simulcast, and other kinds of programming have been monitored via FM. The general fare, when Scott is absent, appears to be music; however, the PTL Club is scheduled regularly for afternoon and evening broadcasts.

Dr. Scott is perhaps the most sympathetic character on the UHF religion broadcasts. He is presented as an embattled champion of "the right," trying to keep commitments in which he believes deeply. He is a lone voice crying out against a world which has ceased to maintain any moral standards. He is abandoned by his friends, a veritable Quixote, seeking an impossible dream. Theologically, he is as conservative as his counterparts on Channel 40, but the thing which distinguishes him from the others is his humanity. This is a man who has suffered for his cause; the others appear to be making a profit.

PROGRAM ANALYSES, VHF STATIONS: COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS

Ultraconservative Christianity continues its monopoly in broadcasting on the VHF band. There are more than fifty programs each week which might be categorized as "religious." Of these less than 10 percent could be considered outside the fundamentalist spectrum, and only one of these ("Commitment," sponsored by the University of Judaism) could guarantee that conservative Christianity would not be a featured attraction. The others are public service shows, aired at the discretion of local stations, and usually featuring a variety of viewpoints.¹

It does not appear to be either desirable or necessary to review here all of the programs relating to religion on VHF channels. The following program synopses indicate what a random viewer might find on any given day.

PTL Club

Sunday mornings at 7:30 a.m. and weekdays at 7:30 a.m. the PTL Club is shown on Channel 9. The PTL Club, which has grown from a single deep-South outlet to a nationwide phenomenon in the past five years, features

¹See Chapter III, pp. 39 ff., for RIM program analyses.

the talents of Jimmy Bakker. Bakker is a young evangelist, described by almost everyone as "cherubic." PTL runs very nearly the same format as "Let's Just Praise the Lord," which is also very nearly the same format as "The 700 Club": a little interview, a little testimony, a little music, a little prayer, and a little pitch. The one feature which distinguished the PTL Club from all others in its milieu was an interview with a Black woman, the only member of any minority group to have a speaking part on any of the shows viewed (Oral Roberts features an All-Black choir). The woman, one of PTL's "counsellors," noted that "Jesus Christ's atoning blood" is the only thing which can overcome racial strife. This was also the only reference to any social problem made on any of the shows, with the exception of the down-and-outer noted in "Church in the Home" (see below).

Day of Discovery

"Day of Discovery" is shown at 7:30 a.m. on Channel 9 (Sundays), as well as 11:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on Channel 5. This show is produced by the Radio Bible Class, and features Dr. Richard Hahn and the Discovery Singers. The program is broadcast from Cypress Gardens, Florida, and is a nicely choreographed upbeat show. An interview with a gardener--"Do you know the Lord?" and "How long?"--is spliced in between musical numbers. The

remainder of the show is devoted to Bible Study with Dr. Hahn; the topic for the day is: "The Rapture"--Christ is coming in the air. From the sound of Dr. Hahn, this may be the topic of every broadcast. To be fair to Dr. Hahn, it should be noted that he at least had the good taste not to sign off with ". . . till we meet in the air or over the air . . . God bless ya." This was the actual close of "Meeting Time at Calvary" (Channel 9 at 8:30 a.m. the same day).

It Is Written

On Channel 7 at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, the Seventh Day Adventists present George Vandeman. Vandeman's show begins listing strange phenomena in the O. L. Jagers style of the 50's. He then proceeds to discuss the effect of diets on personality formation. Meat, alcohol, and tobacco are included in the Adventists' dietary concerns for a better world. Like virtually every other program viewed, Vandeman offers to send a free book (in this case, "It's Your World: Good Health") to interested listeners. The "free gift technique is used to secure names and addresses of listeners for highly sophisticated, computer-operated fund solicitation programs.

Amazing Prophecy News

The Rev. LeRoy Jenkins of Delaware, Ohio, appears

weekly at 10:30 on Sunday mornings. Jenkins sounds the alarm: "The devil will lie to you." Of special concern in his warning are the activities of the organized churches. He describes organized churches as "old hypocrites" which "are not faithful" and which "prevent God's work." His prescription is for viewers to learn the Word of God for themselves, presumably by listening to "Amazing Prophecy News" and sending in for a free booklet. ("Don't forget to enclose a love offering!")

Church in the Home

Far from being a church service broadcast for the shut-ins who cannot attend the church of their choice, "Church in the Home" takes the viewer to skid row. Down and outers are interviewed, and donations are solicited to help provide food, clothing, temporary shelter and other forms of assistance to many who are down on their luck.

The show is hosted by Dr. Fred Jordan, and men and women off the streets tell their stories of hardship and despair. Jordan seems to welcome each person and appears to genuinely rejoice in an opportunity to be of help. After hours of viewing, this appears to be the only regularly scheduled religious broadcast which makes appeals for funds in order to give direct assistance to persons in need. There are no statistics provided to

indicate the percentage of the funds which goes to relief and the percentage which goes to the fund-raising effort itself. It is particularly interesting to note that, when fund-raising campaigns are carried on in Los Angeles by mail, a permit from the Department of Social Services is required for inclusion, along with a statement about disbursement of the funds. However, even though television stations are licensed by the federal government, no such disclosure is required in fund-raising by broadcasters.

The actual figures might prove otherwise, but, on the surface, Dr. Jordan appears to be engaged in a humanitarian enterprise, motivated by a basically fundamental approach to religion. The show airs on Channel 13 at 11:00 a.m. Sundays.

A Better Life

Sundays at noon on Channel 13 Joe Barnett and the Better Life Singers present "A Better Life." The reference in the title is apparently to life after death. Barnett is clear that there is more than one kind of death, and that "the second death" (death of the soul) is to be feared more than the first (death of the body). His comments on life, death, and judgment are supported with "proof-texts" taken out of context and reflect no contact with current, i.e., twentieth century Biblical

scholarship beyond study of the scriptures themselves.

Like the other preaching encountered on both UHF and VHF stations, there appears to be no understanding for or appreciation of the tools of exegesis or form criticism. Even though the concepts embodied in demythologizing would most certainly be appalling to the t.v. preachers, they appear not to have been introduced to the concept.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

Timing and Audience

It may be worth noting that much of the "religious broadcasting" occurs during the hours when church members are most likely to be preparing for or involved in their own worship services: i.e., Sunday morning. It is also worth noting that, given the above scheduling, the potential audience for such programming will not likely be involved in Biblical or theological studies in their own church; otherwise, they would not be available for viewing the shows.

Perhaps this will give a clue to the success of the commercial religious broadcasters. If one may assume that the audience is not a church-going audience, but rather stay-at-homes or "shut-ins," it could account for the lack of theological and/or Biblical sophistication

of the target audience. A show like "Old Time Gospel Hour" (Channel 13, Sundays at 9:30 a.m.) can really be an "old-timey" show--to the delight of its audience which may have had no contact at all with a more contemporary expression of the Christian community. It must also be acknowledged, however, that the audience may have had contact with a contemporary expression and found it to be disappointing.

Program Content

The one thing which is altogether clear is that the viewer will have no contact with a contemporary expression of the Christian faith on commercial religious television. Such a statement deserves amplification, and possibly some delimitation as well.

The Los Angeles Times published a story by John Dart² which summarizes, in brief terms, mainline theological study over the past twenty years and tends to confirm a statement by John Cobb in a course on contemporary theology: "Eighty per cent of the working theologians today would not think of themselves as theists."³

²John Dart, "Vast Gap in Doctrine: Did Jesus Rise Bodily? Most Scholars Say No," Los Angeles Times (September 5, 1977). See Appendix A.

³John B. Cobb, Jr., "Current Trends in Theology," an extension class for School of Theology at Claremont, Fall 1976.

The most articulate reply to Dart's article came from entertainer Pat Boone,⁴ who expresses the convictions of most of the religious broadcasters on t.v.

It is evident that Boone's position fixes on the question: "What does the Bible say?" Most mainline theologians are convinced that the more important question is: "What does the Bible mean?"

⁴Pat Boone, "Did Jesus Rise Bodily?" Letter to the Editor, Los Angeles Times, September 17, 1977. See Appendix B.

CHAPTER III

MAINLINE CHURCHES AND PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

The mainline denominations in the Los Angeles area have been involved with the broadcast industry in one way or another since 1948. Both the Southern California Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches have maintained offices relating to the industry. Several denominations, including the United Methodist Church (through its Television, Radio and Film Commission--TRAFCO), have established media liaison programs in this area.

In the late 1960's and early 70's, as denominational and ecumenical agency budgets were trimmed (and programs reduced), most of these offices were discontinued, including the NCC and TRAFCO. The Southern California Council of Churches continued to operate its Radio, Television and Film Commission until 1973, when it fell victim to two trends of the times.

First, the conciliar movement went into decline, as more and more controversial programs and positions were adopted by Council bodies (i.e., antiwar, farm workers, draft counseling, the Angela Davis case, urban problems, et al.). Denominational bodies became reluctant to support general budgets for conciliar activities

and moved toward a "task force style" of operation. Under this style, the conciliar bodies would spin off task forces, and denominations could "opt" in or out, depending on the position of the particular adjudicatory. Second, the issues of the times put denominations and local congregations in a financial squeeze also, and this meant less income for ecumenical activity. Thus, lack of trust, plus lack of funds, accounted for the new style of operation.

One of the new task forces created by the Southern California Council of Churches was intended to relate to mass media, and the Council approached the project very carefully. For some two decades the Council's work in broadcasting had been under the direction of Dr. Clifton Moore, the United Presbyterian executive of the Commission. There is general agreement that Moore was the guiding force in mainline Protestant broadcasting in Los Angeles and that he pioneered and created most of the programming for the churches during this period. (Most stations provide free "public service time" for the religious community, and Moore served as the media "broker" for the Council's member denominations.) The transition to a new organization, coupled with Moore's retirement, was seen as a time in which new strategies for media/church relationships should be explored. Extensive studies and discussions were carried out prior to

the establishment of the new task force.¹ Finally, on March 7, 1973, the Council developed a set of guidelines, describing its expectations for the new organization.² The task force was incorporated on June 19, 1973, as the Religious Radio-Television-Film Association of Southern California. It was soon to become known as the Religion in Media Association (RIM). RIM, under the leadership of a new Executive Director, Mrs. Mary Dorr, became the new "broker" for the Council of Churches. During the course of this study, the relationship between RIM and the Council of Churches was terminated.³

RELIGION IN MEDIA

Religion in Media is a council-created (but independent and interreligious) nonprofit corporation. It was intended to be the official representative of participating religious bodies. An analysis of the relationship between the conciliar denominations and RIM will follow in the next section, but a study of RIM broadcasting will indicate the results of the coalition's efforts. RIM, as

¹"Proposal for an Office of Mass Media," United Presbyterian Synod, 1972. See Appendix C.

²"Description of the Religious Radio-TV-Film Association of Southern California." See Appendix D.

³See Chapter IV.

the designated representative of the Council of Churches, was the point of contact between the broadcast industry and the religious community. RIM served as the major vehicle through which individual radio and television stations made available public or "community service" time to the religious community.

The attached brochure⁴ which I wrote for RIM will indicate the extent of the services which RIM provides. The brochure was originally intended as a written goal-statement for the organization, in order to have some documented policies and purposes for the organization. It was written in consultation with the Rev. David Gray of the Hollywood Congregational Church, on the basis of information supplied by Mary Dorr. Dr. Randall Phillips, chairman of RIM's Board of Directors at the time, gave me the assignment.

It is difficult to assess the real impact of RIM on television broadcasting in the Los Angeles Metropolitan area. As indicated in the above brochure, RIM claims to have access to public service broadcast time with an estimated commercial value of fifty-three million dollars (radio and television combined).

A careful analysis of RIM's claims might raise

⁴"Introducing Religion In Media," 1976. See Exhibit A.

questions about their validity. RIM claims, in the promotional material, to take credit for many programs which might well be aired with or without benefit of Religion in Media. The organization also claims credit for broadcasts in Bakersfield, Palm Springs, Santa Barbara, Phoenix, Ventura, and "cable systems across the USA."⁵ Since the programs so described ("High Adventure" and "Davey and Goliath") are produced by someone else and syndicated for distribution throughout the country, their relationship with RIM is not entirely clear.

According to RIM program logs, programs which are "produced, distributed and/or promoted" by Religion in Media are included in the fifty-three million dollar figure. According to Mary Dorr, the above also includes placing personnel on programs, placing programs on the air, and the coordination of broadcasters' requests with resources of the religious community. In the latter instances, programs might be described as being co-produced by RIM.

RIM's 1977 Report to the Board of Directors⁶ outlines the relationships between the organization and the television industry. In 1976, the latest year for which figures are available, RIM was involved with 827 one-half

⁵See Exhibit B, "RIM Program Logs."

⁶See Exhibit C, "RIM Annual Report."

hour programs, for a total of 413 (sic) hours of broadcast time. The breakdown is as follows:

<u>Distributed</u>		<u>Co-Produced</u>		<u>Produced</u>		<u>Total</u>	
<u>No.</u>	<u>Hrs.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Hrs.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Hrs.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Hrs.</u>
559	279½	159	79	109	54½	827	413

The totals are impressive. The production of two weekly half-hour television programs would be impressive enough, even if there were no other credits to claim. The fact that RIM co-produces three additional half-hour television shows, while maintaining a variety of other involvements in radio, t.v., public service announcements, and brief devotionals, is indicative of the wide commitments and accomplishments of the organization.

Part of the difficulty in assessing RIM's impact on television broadcasting is due to the fact that many programs listed in RIM's program logs are no longer on the air, and others are frequently preempted by news and sports shows. There is every reason for RIM to note past programs in promotional material, for the programs were legitimate products of the organization; nevertheless, it is confusing for those who might want to monitor programs to look for shows which are no longer being broadcast.

A somewhat larger question in assessing RIM's impact is the degree to which RIM may legitimately claim credit for distributing or promoting shows which are

produced by other groups with their own syndication and distribution systems, i.e., "This Is the Life," produced by the Missouri Synod Lutheran Layman's League, and "Davey and Goliath," also produced by the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church. Both shows are far above average in program quality. "Davey and Goliath" is a particularly charming and winsome show, effectively produced for children's audiences.

PROGRAM ANALYSES

In spite of these questions, there are at least five weekly half-hour programs currently shown on Los Angeles television to which RIM makes a singular contribution as producer or co-producer. There is no question as to the importance of RIM's relationship to these programs. The following program analyses represent random monitoring of these five shows in order to learn something of the character and flavor of each program.

Dimensions--KABC (Channel 7)

"Dimensions" is shown on Sunday mornings at 8:30 or 9:30 a.m., depending on other KABC programming. According to the credits, the show is produced by Mary Dorr "under the auspices of the Religion in Media Association." Mrs. Dorr is the hostess/interviewer of this program which has a talk-show format.

The first show monitored, August 21, 1977, featured an interview with three "born again" Roman Catholics and was devoted to a discussion of the "charismatic renewal movement" with the Catholic Church.

The second viewing of "Dimensions" was April 30, 1978, and featured interviews with spokespersons for the Orthodox Church. The subject was the Orthodox celebration of Easter and included a discussion on fasting practices, Easter-egg decoration, and the blessing of the homes of parishioners.

The third "Dimensions" show was viewed on May 7, 1978, and proved to be equally interesting from the standpoint of the mainline denominations. Dr. Norvel and Mrs. Helen Young were interviewed. Young serves as chancellor of Pepperdine University, a Los Angeles school sponsored by the Church of Christ. Young takes credit for having baptized Pat Boone and speaks of the importance of a "saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."

In contrast to Channel 40's views on marriage, the Youngs describe mutual submission as the key to marital success, and Mrs. Young stresses the responsibility of the mother to remain in the home until children have reached the age of eighteen. Her advice for young marrieds is to establish daily prayers and devotionals and to read the 13th Chapter of I Corinthians every day for the first year of the marriage.

Young describes the Church of Christ and says that "Christ is our only creed . . . the Bible is our only source of faith." He says that every congregation is independent and that church membership involves "belief, confession, and baptism." The program stresses the fact that the individual congregation in the Church of Christ is not connected to any conference, synod or larger organization.

Belief--KNXT (Channel 2)

"Belief" is shown on Sunday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. According to the credits "KNXT and the Religion in Media Association present" the program on a joint-sponsorship basis. Mary Dorr is, again, the hostess/interviewer, and the program has a talk-show format.

My first attempt to monitor "Belief" (August, 1977) was frustrated because football games were being shown on Sunday afternoon. The next effort, April 30, 1978, was more successful. Mrs. Dorr conducted an interview with Bill Bright of Campus Crusade and Mrs. Bright. Bright described the many facets of his work, including "Here's Life America" (the "I Found It" campaign), Athletes in Action, his Four Spiritual Laws (250 million in print in every known language), and his call to a worldwide ministry.

On May 7, 1978, "Belief" featured an interview with gospel singer Pam Hart and her husband, Tony. Between songs and testimonials, Pam describes her childhood in churches which failed to emphasize a relationship with Jesus Christ. Mrs. Dorr observes that she (Pam) is not "limited" to a denomination, and Pam replies that "God did not intend denominations" in the first place.

Tony talks a bit about his intended career (entertainment law), describes his alcoholic father and his brother's suicide. His favorite Bible verse is in the 8th Chapter of Romans: "All things work together for good. . . ."

The program was late in coming on the air; it was preempted by a puppet show.

Today's Religion--KNXT (Channel 2)

"Today's Religion," according to the credits, is produced "in cooperation with Religion In Media, the Board of Rabbis and the Catholic Archdiocese." The program is shown Sundays at 6:30 a.m., with a repeat later in the day where scheduling permits. The show has a basic interview format.

On August 28, 1977, Bill Stout and Ruth Ashton Taylor hosted guests from the Unification Church and discussed the subject of so-called "Moonies" (followers of Rev. Sun Myong Moon).

On April 30, 1978, Stout was host to three guests. A Jewish Rabbi delivered a monologue on the importance of good behavior. An Orthodox Navy Chaplain spoke out against homosexuality, and a Catholic priest argued that the Gallup Poll was not a proper format for determining church policy or practice. In the very little dialogue on the show, the priest joined the chaplain in opposing homosexuality as a behavioral life style. His position appeared to compromise on one point, saying that a "celibate" (latent?) homosexual might be tolerable. The problem arises, he said, when the "acting out" occurs. The chaplain, however, was adamant. Celibate or promiscuous, homosexuality is bad news.

On May 7, "Today's Religion" was viewed for a third time. Ruth Ashton Taylor carried on the interview, and the subject was The Institute for Changing Ministry at the University of Southern California. Interviewed were Dr. Fran Burnford, Director of the Institute, Dr. Alvin Rudisill, University Chaplain, and Fr. Edward Penonzek, a member of the Board of Directors.

This program tried to show the way in which a university can respond to the needs of the religious community. The goal is to help laity understand and participate in ministry, not "in church" but "at work in the world." The focus is on a participatory style for the laity and a concept of shared ministry. On the whole,

this seemed to be the most helpful of the shows seen on "Today's Religion" and seemed most consistent with main-line Protestant commitments.

Odyssey--KNBC (Channel 4)

"Odyssey" is shown Sunday mornings at nine or ten o'clock, depending on other program commitments. The basic format is "magazine television" with in-studio interviews and a capability of going "on location" for special segments. The concept is similar to "60 Minutes" and the show will generally cover three major subjects. In addition, there is a segment devoted to a summary of current events in the religious community.

On August 21, 1977, Odyssey visited three retreat centers which were sponsored by Jewish, Buddhist, and Catholic groups. Nicole Pierce, the interviewer, was informal, probing, and well-informed. At least two of the three segments of the show seemed pedantic and moved slowly. Only the Jewish sequence filmed at the Brandeis Institute seemed to come off as a lively and interesting subject: "recovering roots and identity." The interview with the Catholics at their Malibu site included "interesting" pieces of information such as the source and nature of sacramental wines used in the celebration of the Eucharist. Odyssey's credits state, "This program is produced in association with the Religion in Media

Association, the Board of Rabbis of Southern California and the Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese." Carla Kallan produces the show for KNBC.

My second monitoring of Odyssey was perhaps the most rewarding viewing of any of the so-called religious television I have seen during the past six months. Jess Marlow hosted three top-notch segments, all different and each fascinating. After having just watched an Orthodox chaplain and a Catholic priest discuss homosexuality in a one-sided attack earlier in the morning (see above), it was most gratifying to see another approach to the subject by another station. The issue was the ordination of homosexuals in the Presbyterian Church, and Marlow conducted a discussion of the question with two Presbyterian clergypersons, one straight and one gay. The commitment to genuine dialogue over this controversial issue was particularly impressive in the light of the previous program, where only the moderator, Bill Stout, represented any kind of objective dialogue on the issue before the panel.

The other segments dealt with the work of an "unorthodox"/Orthodox rabbi with college students and with research on deathbed experiences suggesting after-life.

This program, viewed on April 30, 1978, did not carry the RIM credit, and I have learned that the

relationship with RIM has been discontinued by KNBC. The Southern California Council of Churches has been asked to fill the sponsoring position, but has declined to accept this role at the present time.

Odyssey was viewed for a third time on May 7, 1978. The program featured an interview with David Yeaman, producer of "Brigham," a film on the Mormon Church. The other major and most interesting portion of the program dealt with the Sufi movement in Los Angeles. The movement is based on meditation through dance, and is intended to produce in the practitioner "openness and graciousness in everyday life." According to Tasnim, the teacher of the Sufis, the movement is open to all religions, for "truth is truth . . . not Sufi truth or Jewish truth."

Unit VI--KTTV (Channel 11)

The other show in which RIM plays a major role is "Unit Six," shown Saturday mornings at 6:30 a.m. Presumably this same show was called Unit Five last year and Unit Four the year before that.

My first experience with Unit Six was a Mary Dorr interview with three guests. Ms. Mildred Arnold, Executive Director of the Los Angeles Council of Churches, was the first to be interviewed. She described the work of the Council, including various literacy programs aimed at

teaching "survival skills" to participants.

The second guest was the Rev. Douglas Walker, pastor of the United University Church on the campus of U.S.C. Walker discussed his ministry of counseling with students. The third guest was Lloyd Workman, director of "Help Line," a telephone assistance program.

The second viewing of Unit Six, conducted on May 20, 1978, featured Dr. Mary Jane Holloway, Chairperson of the Consumer Concerns Division of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. This show, like the third seen on May 27, 1978, had little or nothing to do with any branch of the religious community.

The May 27 show was hosted by Marjorie Humphrey, and featured a discussion of preventative mental health with the staff of the Life Development Center of Glendale, California. Two marriage counselors and a psychologist were interviewed.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

After viewing almost all of the more than fifty "religious" programs broadcast in the Los Angeles area at the present time, there are a number of observations which seem to be warranted. These observations come from a particular theological bias, and they might not find broad support within the religious community. Nevertheless, they are comments which have been evoked by the

viewing experience.

1. There is no consistent or dependable voice of the Mainline Protestant Church in Los Angeles television. Although individual Protestants may be seen from time to time on any of several given shows, there is no program, currently on the air, in which the interests or commitments of the mainline churches can find regular expression. One might just as likely find interviews with charismatic Catholics or Bill Bright which differ little from the fare on commercial religious broadcasts (apart from the absence of the "pitch").

2. Protestant leadership is invisible in the second largest media market in the nation. There is virtually no indication of the presence of spokespersons for any of the mainline Protestant churches. Much of television is based on personality, and this is particularly true of so-called religious television; however, the personalities with the broadcast visibility are the faith-healers, the hucksters, and the "big buck" evangelists whose give-away programs are thinly disguised schemes for raising more money. When was the last time the Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles or the Moderator of the Presbytery or the President of the Synod addressed Los Angeles television viewers? Does anyone even know who they are? It may be that no one cares; nevertheless,

the voice of the organized religious community is absent from the screen.

3. So-called religious television provides a daily diet of "interesting" stories about churches, about Easter-egg decorating, sacramental wines, and miraculous healings: "As if by magic I . . . (a) overcame arthritic pain; (b) found that my tumor had disappeared; (c) was cured of bleeding colon." Take your choice. The airwaves are filled with interesting things! Thus has the gospel of Jesus Christ been reduced to anecdotes about individuals and churches.

This reductionistic view of the gospel and of things "religious" ignores the issues and ideas which are the bread and butter of the Protestant community. In the "pleasant" world of religious television there is no indication of the conflicts which have shaped our churches or the commitments which find contemporary expression in the tension between church and culture. There is no sense of life's ambiguity or the struggles to which Christian peoples are committed.

Religious television is filled with success stories: testimonials to good health, good fortune, fame and stardom. The vulnerable and the vincible do not sell well in any market place, and they rarely appear on religious t.v. The value systems of "TV religion" seem to

be incompatible with the values of the church, and alternative value systems and life-styles have little visibility in television's homogenized religion. This concern is heightened when prime-time television and news broadcasts deal candidly with issues of women's rights, abortion, the environment, and armaments, while those same issues are virtually excluded from religious programming. In short, not only does religious programming ignore the gospel; it also ignores the world. The theological perspective of the mainline Protestant churches can never separate the two, for the gospel is never gospel in a vacuum. Its particularity in the world is the very meaning of the Incarnation.

4. There is no preaching on programs sponsored by Religion in Media. According to Mary Dorr the stations do not want preaching on the air. She says that programming executives describe preaching as "deadly"; it can kill ratings. Yet there is an enormous amount of preaching taking place on television, and most of it is absolutely abysmal. The preaching in commercial programming is generally other-worldly, anti-intellectual, and self-serving. It is designed to captivate, to manipulate, and to guarantee that the cards and letters keep coming ("love offering optional").

The logic and passion of the free pulpit of

Protestantism is missing from television. The proclamations of liberation and forgiveness, of grace and compassion find no place on the airwaves. There are no words of judgment, no quest for the meaning, no ethical demands or insights, and nothing to contradict the theological illiteracy so widespread in televisionland.

One might hope that t.v. executives abandoned preaching because they found it too hard-hitting over the past decade of Watergate, Vietnam, and other social controversy, but the truth is they found it dull. It may be that preachers representing mainline denominations were selected on the basis of a noncontroversial style. Some may have been selected because of financial support for RIM and its predecessor agency. No matter--the preachers were boring. No matter, except that preaching is one of the major unique expressions of an educated faith, and it is an expression which has changed private lives and public institutions for centuries. Truly great preachers are rare; they do not necessarily show up in large churches, nor do they always turn up as large donors. But there is some awfully good preaching around this city, and one might hope that some of it would find its way to television.

5. Religious television could be a marvelous resource for local churches, but it is not such an asset

in its present form. Today's "religious" television not only fails to reinforce what is occurring in most mainline churches, but it represents a positive contradiction to the insights and contributions of every major theologian of the past fifty years.

* * * * *

It is no wonder that the culture has developed stereotypes of "church" and "religion." The most powerful acculturating medium of our time is presenting a partial and superficial definition of those terms for the entire community. The definition given, the picture shown, the words articulated, represent only a small fraction of the church and only a tiny fragment of the gospel. A holistic view of the church, representing its complexity and its diversity, is absent from television in Los Angeles.

Mainline churches may be grateful that much of what is shown is placed in the "ghetto" times of television to which public service and religious broadcasts are usually relegated. Even if the programs were good, no one would see them. The estimated audience of RIM's shows is about one hundred thousand, according to Mary Dorr (out of a potential audience of some seventeen million). Given the present programming, it is probably better this way. A new broadcast strategy for the church

is necessary, and significant changes must occur if the culture is to receive any vision of the "alternative" religious styles offered by the contemporary church.

CHAPTER IV

MAINLINE CHURCHES AND RIM: A STRATEGY THAT FAILED

THE STRUCTURE OF RIM--THE VISION

The Religion in Media Association, as legal successor of the Council's Commission, was created to serve the interests of the constituent denominations of the Council of Churches. In addition, because of a new spirit of interreligious cooperation present in the community, the participating base was broadened to include nonconciliar denominations, as well as other faith groups and religious communities.

The original By-laws¹ of RIM envisioned strong ties between the new organization and its supporting religious communities and called for each participating denomination or religious community to name its own representative to the Board of Directors. Also, each local council of churches could designate a representative. In addition to such officially designated Board Members, the by-laws called for five "at large members" to be elected by the board. Three representatives of mass media were also to have "at large"

¹By-laws . . . Articles of Incorporation of Religious radio-Television-Film Association of Southern California," 1972. See Appendix E.

status on the board.

A proposal to amend the first set of by-laws was drafted in late 1973.² The amended by-laws would have named two Council of Churches representatives as members of the Board of Directors, in addition to those indicated above. There is no indication of the fate of this proposal, since Mary Dorr informed the RIM Board on April 30, 1978, that there were no records and no minutes of meetings from that period in the organization's files.

It is at least clear that, in its early stages, RIM was expected to be accountable to the denominations, as organized religious communities, and that those communities were intended to represent the broad spectrum of the religious life of Los Angeles. In 1974 Mrs. Mary Dorr was named as Executive Director of the new organization.³

THE STRUCTURE OF RIM--THE REALITY

Although the Board of Directors was intended to be directly accountable to sponsoring religious bodies, it has not been so for at least the past two and one-half

²"By-laws . . . of the Religious Radio*Television *Film Association of Southern California," [Revised] 1973. See Appendix F.

³Dan L. Thrapp, "Group Aims to Put Religion in Mass Media," Los Angeles Times (December 15, 1974), pt IV, p. 6. See Appendix G.

years. Previous records do not appear to be available, so there is no indication of what the first year's experience may have been.

Since my first contact with RIM in late 1975, as representative of the Pacific and Southwest Conferences of the United Methodist Church on the Board of Directors, there has been virtually no adherence to any of the available by-laws, so far as membership is concerned.

The first of what was to become a long series of misgivings about RIM occurred in my initial meeting with the Board of Directors. At that time, three new members of the Board were introduced. None of the three had been named as representatives by their respective communions. One belonged to a Baptist congregation which had rejected its membership in the Southern Baptist Convention. Of the others, one was a Latter Day Saint and the other a Catholic layman. All three appeared to be committed church people and successful businessmen, as well as committed to RIM. In speaking for the group the Baptist indicated that they liked the "conservative" approach by Mary Dorr and wanted to help support her efforts.

This event is not particularly noteworthy except for the fact that by January 1976, approximately one-half the members of the twenty-six person board represented neither denominations, organized religious

communities, nor councils of churches. All were "at-large" members, either from the community or from the media. Of the official representatives, only about five appeared to function with any regularity.

By the time of the RIM Awards Banquet, October 1977, some two thirds of the members of the Board of Directors fell into the at-large category.⁴ Indeed, one of the vice-presidents of the organization was "appointed" by another vice-president shortly before the banquet and appeared on the program to the surprise of other members of the Board. By late 1977 RIM had de facto ceased to represent the organized religious community.

THE DETERIORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RIM
AND THE ORGANIZED RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY:
THE DENOMINATIONS' SIDE OF THE STORY

On January 11, 1978, Dr. Irwin Trotter, President of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Council of Churches, delivered an ultimatum to the Directors of Religion in Media.⁵ Trotter indicated that the denominations within the Council had decided either to reestablish RIM's accountability to the organized religious community or to create a new communications consortium with genuine accountability to the denominations.

⁴RIM Banquet Program. See Appendix H.

⁵Letter from J. Irwin Trotter to Directors of RIM. See Appendix I.

Thus within a period of four and one-half years, the dream of an interreligious media project in southern California had reached a crisis point. What happened? As Trotter's memo indicates, blame can be attached to both sides. Trace the history carefully, and this appears to be the story.

Some time early in the life of RIM (and probably after the hiring of Mary Dorr) the Council of Churches lost control of the organization. The goals for RIM which had been drawn up by the Council of Churches never seemed to get implemented. Mrs. Dorr was hired for her expertise in production, and that expertise is what RIM got. The most natural course, and the course of least resistance, was to follow the patterns established by Clifton Moore in the predecessor organization.

Council members sitting on the RIM Board saw their hopes for a new media strategy abandoned, and disenchantment set in. Proponents of the old strategies, long-time supporters of Moore, had not wanted change anyway, and they became active as members-at-large. Program production was a partial fulfillment of the goals of the Council, but it was number six on the list of priorities. Dr. Glen Crago, one of the initial members of RIM's Board (representing the Church of the Brethren) states that he became disenchanted with RIM quite early. However, he says that other denominational

representatives seemed pleased with the operation, and he decided to drop out without making trouble for anyone. This seems to have been the major pattern of behavior from the denominational representatives.

The United Presbyterian Church dropped out of RIM in 1976, without discussing their decision with anyone. They simply cut off their funding and dropped out of sight. (Interestingly, the Executive Committee of RIM met with United Presbyterians over the matter but never even discussed the issue with other members of the RIM Board. Indeed, the Board was never officially informed of the Presbyterian departure or given any of the explanations offered about the decision.)

In November 1977, a member of the Executive Committee indicated privately to me his own reservation about RIM's operating style. The problem? Certain individuals on the Executive Committee were making commitments for RIM without authorization, and "accepted organizational procedures" were being ignored.

In December 1977, a representative of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles (which had provided office space for RIM) confided that Diocesan funding for RIM was to be suspended in 1978 and that office space would no longer be available. One of the major reasons given was a lack of sensitivity to other faith groups, or Christian bodies outside the "Evangelical" orientation.

It had already been announced to the RIM Board that United Methodist funding was to be suspended in 1978 due to budget cuts related to the Pacific Homes crisis.

During the early years of RIM the Council of Churches was having its own problems. Staff and budgets were cut to the bone, and there was no one with the time or the commitment to review the work of RIM. The Rev. Benjamin Moore, designated representative of the Council of Churches, had not attended a meeting of the Board of RIM in more than two years.

It must be conceded that a major cause of the deteriorating relationships between RIM and the mainline church was the defection rate of the denominations' representatives. None confided their misgivings with the others. And none got together for strategizing until it was too late for effective action.

Nor did any of these representatives on the RIM Board bring their quarrels to the Board itself. In short, there was a basic case of organizational dishonesty within the RIM organization. Perhaps it was a fear of being rejected. Nevertheless, the record of the mainline churches was not very good, in terms of organizational integrity. They created RIM, and they had some responsibility for its direction and behavior; nevertheless, they watched it deteriorate without taking action.

THE DETERIORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RIM
AND THE ORGANIZED RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY:
RIM'S SIDE OF THE STORY

The beleaguered Mary Door and a small group of friends on the RIM Board of Directors had a job to do with or without the assistance of the mainline denominations. The Council of Churches had created RIM, opened it up to a wider body of constituents, and given it a mission. Since the mainline churches were not providing the necessary support, RIM went after members who would help with the fiscal problems.

With mounting bills to be paid, RIM did not have much time for organizational niceties, such as constitutions and by-laws. So new Board members were recruited who were sympathetic to the operation, who liked Mrs. Dorr's "conservative" style, and who were willing to work for the cause.

Mrs. Dorr is admittedly "evangelical" in her orientation, and it is not surprising that she turned for support to persons who shared her point of view. None of the denominational representatives challenged her point of view. None of the denominational representatives challenged the new members named to the Board. None cared enough to risk doing so. Besides, RIM was created to provide an expanded base of operations for the entire religious community--including evangelicals and

Eastern religions, as well as the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities.

Even with the help of the new recruits, as of this writing RIM is about ten thousand dollars in debt. It would not be appropriate for those who have discontinued financial support to quarrel loud or long over the selection of persons who are going to have to raise the money. But there are legitimate quarrels over the state and the fate of RIM, and the following is intended to point to a few of them.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY OF RELIGION IN MEDIA

Volunteer organizations require the confidence of participating members in order to keep commitments alive. Clearly communicated procedures and policies help merit that confidence. In addition, most volunteers must feel that the expenditure of their energy and effort is somehow meaningful to the organization. RIM is in danger of losing the allegiance of its volunteers because of the violation of these two precepts of organizational behavior.

There are many illustrations of ways in which RIM has failed to secure the continued commitment of its membership, and many RIM "dropouts" could be identified in addition to the mainline denominational representatives. In fact, it is a rare occasion on which even half the

Board of Directors shows up for a meeting. The April 1978 meeting was scheduled to be a time to discuss the proposal from the Council of Churches (a major item for the agenda). Yet, barely one third of the Board of Directors bothered to attend!

One of the reasons for this may be a feeling that Board meetings are meaningless. During my tenure on the RIM Board, meetings were frequently cancelled without explanation, and the Executive Committee appeared to run the affairs of the organization without any real need for the Board of Directors. The fact is that for the past two years the RIM Executive Committee made most of the major decisions for the organization, and the Board was given only a minor role to play. The Executive Committee usually met prior to the regular meeting of the Board of Directors; thus, the Executive Committee was usually present "in full force" at Board meetings. On most occasions, members of the Executive Committee would equal or outnumber the other members present and could outvote the remaining membership.

Illustration #1

In 1976 and early 1977 extensive discussions were carried out by the RIM Board regarding the creation of an award for contributions to humanitarian values by mass media. A Mrs. Florence Malouf was to head up the

project, which would include presentations for outstanding contributions to humanitarian values by secular broadcasters and artists.

On March 2, 1977, the Board of Directors was given an extensive briefing on an awards program (later to become the RIM Awards) which specifically excluded any category for humanitarian values and focused, primarily, on religious programming. At least some Board members felt that their previous decision had been ignored by the Executive Committee. (Mrs. Malouf was never heard from again.) If a volunteer Board member feels his/her input is ignored there is little likelihood that person will make any real effort to participate or contribute to the organization.

Illustration #2

One of the major functions of the Board of Directors is the election of its own officers. This duty is spelled out in the constitution of the corporation. Yet in late 1977 one of the vice-presidents of the corporation announced to the RIM Board that he had asked another person to be a vice-president of the organization. And the person asked was not even a member of the Board of Directors! After the new vice-president's "election" had been announced to one thousand persons attending the RIM Awards Banquet, the Board was asked to

confirm the action, after the fact. No nominating committee was involved, and no Board authorization had been secured.

Illustration #3

In fiscal matters, the Board of Directors is ultimately responsible. Legally, the Board of Directors of a nonprofit corporation has responsibility to oversee the affairs of the corporation. If negligence or mismanagement can be proven, Directors may be held responsible for the corporation's debts.

Yet when I left RIM, the finances of RIM appeared to be out of control. In an April 5, 1976, interview with Mary Dorr about the work of RIM, she informed me that the organization was two thousand dollars in arrears on her salary and eight hundred dollars behind on office costs. The Board of Directors finally solved some of these problems by securing a personal loan from one of the members. The loan totalled \$5,750, carries no interest, and has no due date. In addition to that note, there were unpaid bills totalling \$5,100 (as of April 20, 1978). Including the above figures, RIM showed total liabilities of \$11,778.42 in April 1978, against total undesignated assets of \$2,298.59. On the same date, RIM was facing a cash flow problem in its operating budget,

with needs projected at more than one thousand dollars to complete the month.⁶

In spite of the above financial problems, the Board has consistently refused to bring expenditures to a level in keeping with income.

Illustration #4

In December 1977 the treasurer of the corporation told a meeting of Directors (called together to discuss finances) that if the fiscal affairs of the corporation were not put in order he would have to resign his office.

According to the treasurer, funds had been committed without Board authorization and obligations had been undertaken without Board approval. In many cases, the Board of Directors had not even been consulted.

In addition, individual Board members had represented to the Board that certain services would be performed on "a contribution basis" without informing the Board of associated costs of the contribution. In connection with the Awards banquet, the Board was assured by individual members of gifts, donations, and contributions of services which would incur no liability for the organization. Yet after the conclusion of the Awards, RIM was

⁶"RIM Cash Budget April 20, 1978." See Appendix J.

left with unanticipated billings in excess of five thousand dollars.⁷

According to one RIM officer, even the Executive Committee of RIM had lost control of the organization. It is his view that individual members of the group, presumably in consultation with RIM staff, had taken over the organization. It is my own judgment that by the time the conciliar denominations left RIM, the organization had ceased to be administered as a responsible public corporation and was being run more like a private club.

⁷See underlined items in "1977 RIM Awards Banquet." Appendix K.

CHAPTER V

ATTEMPTS TO SALVAGE RIM AND THE CREATION OF ECUMEDIA

Dr. Irwin Trotter, Director of the Conference Council on Ministries of the Pacific and Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church, assigned me to represent the Conference on the Board of Directors of RIM in November 1975. My assignment was to evaluate the work of RIM and to provide recommendations regarding continued United Methodist participation in the organization.

The Development of a Written Statement
of Goals for RIM

Within six months of attending my initial board meeting, I had become apprehensive about several matters in the RIM organization. It was apparent from her reports to the Board of Directors that Mrs. Dorr was working with a variety of nondenominational groups and individuals who had no specific ties with the organized religious community. It appeared to me that, while these groups and individuals are entitled to the presentation of their point of view, it was not the responsibility of RIM to become their broker or media liaison.

Part of the problem appeared to be both a lack of clarity and a lack of general consensus about the nature of the organization and/or its priorities.

Priorities seemed particularly important, since Mrs. Dorr is the only professional staff attached to the organization and her work load is tremendous. If the use of staff time could be allocated on the basis of some commonly accepted set of priorities, I felt Mrs. Dorr's load could be lightened. In addition, it seemed that a scale of priorities would help her determine where her own energies might best be spent. As indicated above (Chapter III), I spoke with Dr. Randall Phillips about this, and he asked me to prepare such a statement as Chairperson of a "goals" committee. The result was what eventually turned out to be the promotional handout "Introducing Religion in Media."¹ The project was completed in the fall of 1976, and the new President, Dr. Karl Knisley, requested that it be distributed in its present form as a promotional document.

As a promotional document, the brochure summarizes the nature of RIM at the time it was written. The brochure's original purpose as a statement of goals is neither forceful nor readily apparent. Part of this was due to compromises made in the document, but the essential concerns are present even in its present form. The key phrases include repeated acknowledgment of the

¹"Introducing Religion in Media," 1976. See Exhibit A.

fact that RIM's constituents are "organized religious communities" and the "representational" nature of the organization on behalf of these communities. The other effort was to balance the mandate for programming to include "moral" and "pro-social" elements within the organization's concerns, in addition to its "spiritual" and "transcendent" emphases.

Although RIM used the document, it received little attention outside of reproduction for distribution as a public relations document.

Efforts to Rewrite the By-Laws of RIM

Dr. Phillips, before leaving the presidency of RIM, also appointed me to work on a revision of the by-laws of the organization. Phillips shared at least two of my concerns: the need to bring the main line denominations into a greater role on the Board of Directors and the need to reestablish RIM's ties with the organized religious community. Other members of the committee included Bill Huston, an attorney and President of the Watson Land Development Company, RIM's Treasurer; James Kendrick, Houston's former law partner and attorney for both RIM and Mary Dorr; the Rev. David Gray, pastor of the Hollywood Congregational Church; and Mary Dorr, staff.

Several issues became clear in comparing the

present constitution and by-laws with the actual operating style of the organization, and these issues became my major agenda in rewriting by-laws for RIM. The issues are described below.

1. The corporation was established to represent organized religious communities but, in fact, there was little involvement by organized religions or denominations. In fact, individuals with no representational authority were making policy decisions which should have been the province of "officially designated" persons from denominations or faith groups.
2. The envisioned "multiple-religious base" had eroded to the point that RIM's Board was largely controlled by an exclusivistic and sectarian point of view. This is related to the first concern, but it is also related to RIM's need for directors who would work to keep the organization financially viable in view of the attrition rate of the conciliar denominations. Thus, there was a need to provide a "representational" nature of the Board, while at the same time providing organizational and fiscal support.
3. The entire question of the meaning of

membership in RIM was unclear. The original by-laws provided for two classes of membership in RIM: individual and corporate. Individuals could belong to the general membership through contributions of service or funds. This general membership, in an annual meeting, was expected to elect at-large members to the Board of Directors. The annual membership meeting had been discontinued before my appointment to the RIM Board, and the Board was self-perpetuating. Corporate members were to be appointed by their respective religious communities to fill out the membership on the Board, but this process had not been cultivated since I first became acquainted with RIM.

My proposal, accepted by the committee, was to address all of the above concerns by the development of two strategies. The first was to accept the fact that the general membership and corporate memberships were already defunct. The solution would be to have only one class of membership in the organization, and that would be membership on the Board of Directors itself. The Board would continue to be the policy-making body for the organization.

The second half of the proposal was to establish

a Religion in Media Board of Advisors with members to be appointed by the titular head of each denomination or faith-group related to RIM. At that time Mrs. Dorr indicated, and has subsequently published lists purporting to substantiate her claim, that seventy different religious bodies in southern California are involved with RIM. This Board of Advisors, under the new by-laws, would have the power to elect one third of the members of the Board of Directors from their own number.

In addition, my proposal called for one permanent representative on the Board of Directors from each of the three major faiths, as represented by the Council of Churches, the Board of Rabbis, and the Catholic Archdiocese. This would give the organized religious community a total of ten guaranteed votes on the twenty-seven member Board of Directors.

I must hasten to point out that this would not guarantee a "block" of ten votes on any given issue, since the various denominations and faith groups may differ on many significant issues; however, the proposal would have made the Board more accountable to the organized religious community.

The proposal had the further advantage of providing enough "at large" openings to offer the Board a capability of recruiting individual members with clout and expertise in either media or fiscal affairs.

On issues of a substantive nature, the ten representatives of the organized religious bodies could challenge the seventeen "at large" members. Using the authority of their representational status, I believe that they could have prevailed in any major controversy. Further, the Board of Advisors, while not an "official" policy-setting group, could take positions, advising the Board of Directors on the desires of constituent religious bodies. Even though these positions might not have the authority of a requirement, the Board of Directors could hardly ignore the expressed desire of those religious bodies which it was created to serve.

Finally, the Board of Advisors could serve as a liaison between RIM and their own religious bodies. The aim would be to use this vehicle to expand the base of support for RIM and to use it as a channel through which expertise in, and commitment to, a media ministry might be cultivated.

Although this proposal had the unanimous support of the By-Laws Committee, Kendrick, the attorney who was to produce the final draft for Board consideration, delayed nine months in getting the document to the Board. When it was finally presented, his version left out all the major features of my proposal. Primarily through the support of Bill Huston, the document was revised to reflect the actual consensus of the Committee and was

presented to the Board of Directors of RIM in December 1977. Since Board members needed time to study the document, action on its adoption was put over until January 1978. The proposal would have been easily adopted had it not been for the following series of events.

1977: The Council of Churches Takes
Another Look at Mass Media

Beginning in the spring of 1977 and running through the end of the year, conciliar denominations began to develop a number of contacts and overlapping interests in the area of communications. For the first time in several years representatives of the various adjudicatories were brought together by mutual concerns regarding communications and mass media. Early in 1977 several denominations cooperated in The Hunger/Media Project. The project was funded by a coalition of denominations at the national level and was intended to sensitize media people to the concerns of global hunger. Bob Kotchitsky, a United Methodist, was Project Coordinator and spent several weeks on the West Coast working with denominational personnel who had interests in communications and hunger. Television Awareness Training, another project initiated at the national level by several denominations, drew denominational communicators together for training at the School of Theology at

Claremont in May. Finally, EVCOM, a third project initiated by the national offices of several denominations, created a third opportunity for local persons with a communications interest to be in dialogue. EVCOM emphasized combining the skills of communications with a commitment to evangelism.

The question of a new media strategy for the conciliar bodies was most sharply focused when national bodies began to seek a way to continue the Hunger/Media project in Los Angeles. Bill Fore of the National Council of Churches and Nelson Price of United Methodist Communications began discussing a second phase of the Hunger Media project with local groups in the fall of 1977. The earliest discussions were held with me and Irwin Trotter, President of the Southern California Council of Churches. Trotter and I had discussed with both men proposals for a Media Advocacy project more than a year earlier.

The discussions resulted in a proposal in which several national denominations would agree to fund up to twenty-five thousand dollars annually for two years to help the Southern California Council of Churches (SCCC) get a media advocacy project off the ground. At least one half of the emphasis would be on issues related to hunger. The initial grant was to be made without prejudice to applications for additional funding at a later

period and was contingent upon local groups providing funds which would substantially match the national grant. Local groups, in turn, would select staff, monitor the project, and provide on-site guidance and evaluation.

The stage was set for the SCCC to take another hard look at its involvement in broadcasting and mass media. Many of the Council's denominational bodies had left RIM at this point, so Trotter called meetings in late 1977 for denominational representatives to review the proposal.

This meeting brought together representatives of denominations which had ceased to be active in RIM, as well as those few which continued to participate in the organization on an official basis. This was the first time in several years that the conciliar groups had convened to review media strategy, and the results were both productive and surprising.

For the first time, denominational representatives shared candid evaluations of the work of Religion in Media. There was an almost unanimous consensus that RIM had ceased to effectively represent the interests of the Council of Churches and its member denominations. Even those who had continued to participate in RIM were doing so with serious misgivings which had not heretofore been expressed in public.

The original hopes for RIM were reviewed and the reality was compared with the vision which had brought RIM into being. In addition, new priorities had emerged in the intervening years, and the meeting produced a host of suggestions for new priorities in the relationships between the church and mass media.

The Hunger/Media Project had developed a style of offering church resources to the creative community. Kotchitsky had found that writers and producers were willing to listen to the church about its concerns and that they were willing to draw on the expertise of the church on matters of public importance. There was general agreement that a prime-time show dealing with hunger as a theme or subtheme could reach more viewers than all the public service programming in a month. The group determined to work on the development of a capability to be a resource of this kind.

Television Awareness and several other programs (i.e., the United Methodist Women's Media Monitoring Project and similar efforts by the P.T.A. and Action for Children's Television) geared to evaluate program content and the effect of programming on the general public, had created a new priority in this area. The potentially damaging influence of televised violence, racism, and sexist images projected by the media were added to the list of priorities for a church/media project.

Additional concerns were listed by the group, including a greater and more consistent visibility for the significant contributions of the churches in the local community. A basic public relations function was added to the list.

The group concluded that current programming, as brokered by RIM, consumed too much of the limited staff time available for church/media relations. This programming, often given a low priority by broadcasters, is frequently shown in the least desirable time slots. The pay-off was not worth the effort, the group concluded; programming, as presently practiced, should be deemphasized.

A new consensus began to take shape. Programming by the church should be more selective in nature. A broadcast strategy should be designed which would commit program development time only where the efforts seemed commensurate with the potential benefits to be derived. It was also determined that the other priorities (suggested above) would become a part of any future cooperative effort among the denominations.

Finally, the group decided to approach RIM with their new consensus. If the RIM Board was responsive, the Council would cooperate and throw its weight behind the organization. If RIM refused, the Council would form a new media consortium which would focus on the

hunger issue but would enable the expression of the other concerns and commitments as well.

The next step was to approach RIM. Trotter requested a meeting with the Board of Directors to review RIM's relations with the Council and to determine the extent to which RIM (still the official vehicle of the Council) might be involved in the new project.² As Trotter indicated, a major issue was "control" of RIM--a control which would be necessary if accountability was to be restored. The issue also involved the whole direction of RIM, its orientation, and the character of its ministry.

The Board of Directors of Religion in Media reacted with understandable anger to Trotter's offer to "take over" RIM. However, the Board agreed to delay action on the proposed by-laws (described above) until a negotiating session could be held between RIM officers and the Council of Churches. The Council of Churches' representatives requested that I chair a new committee with responsibility for drafting a proposal to be submitted to the RIM Board. The Committee, consisting of the Rev. Glen Crago (Church of the Brethren), Mrs. Ruth Nicastro (Episcopal Diocese, L.A.), and Ms. Lorraine

²Letter from J. Irwin Trotter to Directors of RIM. See Appendix I.

Wilson (United Presbyterian), presented the proposals to the denominational representatives and, subsequent to minor revisions, to the RIM Executive Committee and Board.

The Council of Churches Submits Proposal to RIM

The proposal, adopted by the denominational representatives, outlined concerns regarding RIM's structure as well as its program.³ A letter of transmittal to RIM's Board of Directors included a "statement of concern" which is summarized below.

RIM is the legal successor to the Radio-Television and Film Commission of the Southern California Council of Churches. . . . A major RIM responsibility is to represent the interests of the denominational bodies involved. . . .

RIM was created as the official media vehicle for participating religious bodies (denominations and area councils). Denominational endorsement and support was secured on the basis of representations made in the Constitution and By-laws of the organization which assured the organized religious community control of the corporation through majority representation on the Board or Directors. . . .

RIM is now in violation of its own Constitution and By-laws. The denominational and conciliar representatives no longer constitute a majority of members of the Board of Directors. . . .

On behalf of its constituent denominations, the Council of Churches called attention to this matter at the regular meeting of the RIM Board of Directors in January, 1978. . . .

The proposal⁴ itself included a "Statement of

³ See my Letter of Transmittal. Appendix L.

⁴ See "Proposal" of Council of Churches. Appendix

Assumptions" as follows:

Religious broadcasting in Los Angeles is currently ineffective in its efforts to represent the concerns of major denominations to the broad community.

We have put all our energy and resources into the development of programming for the free "Public Service" time made available to the religious community by broadcasters. These programs, low in cost and scheduled at inconvenient and unpopular hours, serve the broadcasters more than they serve the church. They help broadcasters meet "community service" requirements of the Federal Communications Commission, but they do not reach the broad community with the concerns of our denominations.

The meager resources of the church which are committed to media should be utilized so as to most effectively reach the broadest possible segment of the viewing and listening audience. . . .

The Proposal itself expressed guidelines for RIM's future operations and priorities, should the organization choose to work with the Council in the future. The first item noted was the expectation that the Board of Directors would reorganize itself "so that its membership will again conform to its original by-laws." It further stated that "efforts to supply broadcasters with low-cost, low-visibility programming be deemphasized." Specific alternatives were spelled out, as indicated below.⁵

(1) RIM will become a resource for writers and producers, providing new perspectives and insight from the religious community on our major concerns and values such as hunger and justice, and the human search for liberation and meaningful commitment. As media professionals develop trust and respect for the religious community, we believe that

⁵ Ibid.

our concerns will be given greater visibility in secular programming.

(2) RIM will develop and concentrate on a capability of placing meaningful and worthwhile actions of the religious community in secular news broadcasts and other programming. [The rationale is that a story on one major newscast would be seen by more people than RIM's current programming might reach over a period of several weeks.]

(3) RIM will become an advocate of religious concerns in the broadcast industry itself, such as program content and quality, as well as management practices in the industry and issues related to the effect of media on the community.

(4) RIM will consult with denominational communications offices to identify resource persons within the denominations. These persons can serve as a reservoir of talent and expertise available to the industry as spokespersons for the religious community.

On April 3, the proposal was delivered to officers of Religion in Media in a meeting attended by the denominational representatives. It appeared evident from the outset that there would be no meeting of the minds, as RIM officers continued to describe themselves as "representing" some seventy religious bodies in southern California. The question of the degree to which any member of a church may claim to "represent" that church was never resolved.

RIM's Response to the Council's Proposal

The Council of Churches' group requested an answer from RIM at their next Board meeting (scheduled for April 20, 1978) because of the urgent need to make a response to the national denominations. This

urgency had been previously conveyed as early as the meeting in January.

Although the new RIM President, Jerry Nordskog, sent copies of the proposal to RIM Board members, when the April 20th meeting came, no one seemed interested in discussing the matter. RIM Secretary Lawrence Young, who had attended the meeting with Council representatives, casually informed the Board of Directors that the Council of Churches was going to go its own way.

It was necessary for me to personally call the Board's attention to the fact that they had a proposal in writing before them and that the Council of Churches was waiting for an answer. Action on the matter was postponed until the next meeting, scheduled two months later. (As this paper reaches final draft stage on December 1, 1978, RIM has yet to respond to the proposal)

The Board of Directors did take time for a review of the by-laws. On April 3, President Nordskog replaced me as chairperson of the By-laws Committee with the Rev. David Gray. Gray brought the group a new and revised set of by-laws. In the revised version, the concept of a Board of Advisors from constituent religious groups was retained but without any form of representation on the Board of Directors. The new proposal also specified that anyone nominated to the Board of Advisors by a denomination or faith group must have the approval

of the Board of Directors!

New Media Consortium Created--ECUMEDIA

The Council of Churches' group had scheduled a meeting for April 24, 1978, in order to evaluate the response from RIM's Board of Directors. In the light of RIM's failure to act on the Council proposal, the group finalized plans for a new media consortium.⁶ The guidelines for the new organization, to be called ECUMEDIA, are taken from the proposals originally developed for RIM.

The Council of Churches Executive Committee, meeting May 3, 1978, approved the new concept and has called upon all the denominations in the Council to appoint representatives to the governing body of the new organization. In his letter to members of the Council's Task Force on Media, Trotter says hopefully: "I think we are at the beginning of a significant ecumenical ministry."⁷ The goals and guidelines for the new organization are impressive.

ECUMEDIA will be a resource for the broadcast industry and will provide consultations for the creative community on issues of concern to the church.

⁶See "Ecumedia Proposal," Appendix N.

⁷Ibid.

ECUMEDIA will seek out significant events and actions in the churches and will help to raise their visibility in the public consciousness.

ECUMEDIA will monitor the stations themselves, encouraging prosocial programming and management practices.

ECUMEDIA will become a liaison between the churches and the media community, a focal point for the pooling of commitment and expertise in mass communications skills.

ECUMEDIA will enter the broadcast field itself on a scale which will allow the organization--rather than the broadcaster--to determine the priorities for the church.⁸ This new consortium should be able to provide a more consistent forum for the mainline Protestant churches than is currently offered by Religion in Media.

Finally, ECUMEDIA will cooperate, wherever possible, with other religious communities and faiths, recognizing that in the larger world, outside the church, sociological competence is often measured in terms of corporate power. The real sources of effectiveness in the new organization, however, will be related to its insights and its integrity. These are the most important

⁸ Illustrations of the kind of programming which ECUMEDIA might initiate are included in Chapter VII.

gifts which the Christian community may offer to the broadcaster or to the world at large.

If the new organization should be successful in the achievement of even a few of the goals outlined above, it should make a real contribution to the church. Local congregations would be able to identify with an exciting ministry shown on television news. Nonchurchgoers might become more open to examining a new style of Christian life or a theological position seldom articulated on "religious" television. A program dealing with contemporary theological or ethical concerns could encourage pastors who are struggling to combat a public image of the church which is based on the inaccurate and inadequate images currently projected throughout the television world. As indicated in the opening pages of this study, the medium of television has tremendous powers of persuasion which the mainline Christian community has largely ignored. Although ECUMEDIA is borrowing from the insights of many church/media pioneers of the past decade, it represents a fresh creation of a holistic and diversified media ministry. This new effort could come to represent a novel model for examination and adaptation in other media markets and by other coalitions within the Christian community.

General Reflections

The decision by the Council of Churches to terminate relationships with RIM and to establish ECUMEDIA concludes the scope of this project. Someone else may write about ECUMEDIA and trace its developments, its achievements and its flaws.

There is a sense of relief among some denominational communications personnel that RIM ignored the Council's proposals. It must be acknowledged in all candor that there was little enthusiasm for the task of going back to RIM to negotiate a different style and future for the organization. "Evangelicals" and "mainliners" are different, and those involved in the new project seem to share a consensus that the renegotiation of the nature of RIM would have been an unwieldy burden to add to other commitments.

Yet I feel at least two nagging misgivings about the termination of relationships with the Religion in Media Association. The first is related to the conduct of the conciliar denominations themselves. At almost any given time during the past two years the mainline churches could have acted to correct the direction in which RIM was heading. They simply shrank from taking responsibility for the organization which they had created. Working relationships, and some of the personalities involved, may

have been difficult, but they were not insurmountable. The denominations simply "copped out."

RIM had real promise as an interreligious agency in Los Angeles and could have been one of the first of its kind anywhere. Not only did the mainline denominations fail to assume ownership of the organization, but the other major faith groups were never deeply or carefully involved. There was no official representation from the Board of Rabbis or from the Catholic Archdiocese. It may be that they were invited and refused to become involved, and it may be that they were simply overlooked in RIM's own zeal to claim "representational status" for groups to which it was not related.

These other major faiths do have media liaisons established with various television stations, as indicated in the program credits in Section II. It would have seemed possible to find ways to develop some kind of a working relationship among at least the major faiths in the important area of broadcasting.

The Council of Churches has adopted a plan to "go it alone," and all seem moderately pleased with what must be regarded by outsiders as a disappointment, in view of previous goals of interreligious cooperation.

The other side of the story is of a more positive note. After some years of total disarray, the mainline Protestant churches have developed a commitment to,

and a strategy for, renewed involvement with mass media.

The strategy is based on a holistic approach to the media which differs markedly from prior styles of involvement. The new organization will not be oriented toward providing media exposure for individuals in local churches. It will rather include the major concerns of Christian theologians and communications specialists which have been growing and developing during the past decade.

So this research concludes in the ancient Christian tradition: with a "no" and a "yes"--with a "goodbye" and a "hello"--raising ambivalent feelings about ambiguous circumstances and looking forward all the while to the new future which God has in store for us all.

CHAPTER VI

FUTURE BROADCAST STRATEGIES
FOR THE LOS ANGELES RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

The Southern California Council of Churches has now acted to establish a new style of relationship with the television broadcast industry in Los Angeles. As indicated above, the several thrusts of the new strategy will include a provision of resources for the industry on issues of vital concern to the church. The new strategy will include joint action for improving program content and management practices. It will include a new public relations capacity which the mainline churches have heretofore failed to develop.

The Council of Churches has failed to take any action related to programming per se except to go on record as favoring that programming be "de-emphasized" in comparison with the style of the Religion in Media Association. Specifically, the Council has called for limiting programming commitments to correspond with the availability of staff time and that such commitments be made in the context of the other commitments and priorities of the Council.

Since the Council has not taken any steps to concretize its programming stance, the next logical step

in this study appears to be the suggestion of possible "models" around which future program commitments might be designed.

Rationale for Program Content

The foregoing analyses of current so-called religious television broadcasting in Los Angeles indicates that there are three major gaps from the standpoint of the mainline religious communities.

1. There is a dearth of programming related to issues about which the mainline denominations are vitally concerned. The relationship between the church and the world is not apparent on any consistent basis in current program strategies.

2. Many if not most of the current programs related to religion deal with religion as a "solo" affair. Not only is individual religious experience stressed, but it is usually stressed to the exclusion of any community experience. There is nothing current to indicate that an individual is part of a worshipping community or that his/her good works may be representative of a broader community. Altogether missing is any sense of relationship between what happens to individuals corporately and the individual expression of corporate commitments. Since many of the so-called religious programs tend to denigrate organized religion, one component of a new

broadcast strategy could highlight the meaningful relationships between the individual and the Church.

3. Finally, any new broadcast strategy must grapple seriously with the need to present with the greatest possible clarity some sense of direction in which theology has been moving for the past fifty years. This is not a plea for a focus on faddism but for a genuine, hard-headed effort to interpret the premises which most of the mainline churches understand as basic to theological study. This subject will be, potentially, more explosive than even the focus on social issues, since theological illiteracy is so widespread in the culture and since contemporary theological education has been totally ignored by the television broadcast industry. Although the basic theological premises of mainline Christianity have been almost totally reformulated during the past generation, this activity and its implications have been virtually limited to the community of scholars working in graduate schools and seminaries.

Even active members within the mainline churches have had little exposure to these changes in theology, if Edward Hobbes' statements are to be believed.¹ Yet this only serves to underscore the importance of such an

¹Quoted in John Dart, "Vast Gap in Doctrine: Did Jesus Rise Bodily? Most Scholars Say No," Los Angeles Times (September 5, 1977). See Appendix A.

emphasis. Seminary graduates, whose ministry is based on these theological changes, would find in such a program a reinforcement for their own ministry, as well as a tool for helping their congregations deal with new insights.

In addition, those who have left the church out of a conviction that the church was an archaic institution, out of touch with the contemporary world, might once again be attracted to the church by the really thrilling contributions of the disciplined intellects which have helped reshape the fundamental premises of theological study and thought.

Rationale for Program Style

Before setting out to design models to propose to the Council of Churches, interviews were held with several top persons in the field of broadcasting. Charles Cappelman is General Manager of CBS Television City, Los Angeles. Geoff Edwards is an entertainer on both radio and television, has hosted a morning "talk show" on ABC, and has had starring roles in shows on other networks. Glenn Swanson has been the Director of "The Dinah Show" since its inception and has a broad background in both radio and television production. James Wesley is Vice President and General Manager of radio station KFI, Los Angeles, and he serves on the

Standards Committee for the National Association of Broadcasters. Each of those interviewed has unique contributions to make from the vantage point of artists, production and management experience. In addition, each has had deep involvement with the local church. Three major insights came out of the interviews, and these insights, along with the considerations of program content, were largely determinative in the final program concepts which are being submitted.

1. Television is an intimate medium, and "personalities" are among the major components in attracting an audience. Seek to develop programs which feature persons with "charisma," charm and warmth.

It has already been noted that the evangelicals have used this strategy to the hilt. Mainline churches have leaned over backward to avoid an emphasis on "personalities." Part of this may be attributed to the natural modesty inherent in a lifestyle of "humility"; another reason may have been the jealousy between individuals who are reluctant to see anyone from any denomination become part of the "star system."

The churches will have to approach this insight carefully, fully cognizant of the warnings contained in #2 (under Rationale for Program Content) above. The real danger is not that personalities have been used to communicate a religious style so much as the fact that

the style has been that of the "star," the soloist divorced from a community of faith or any commitments to the world.

2. Broadcasters are required to provide public service programming, but are not given a specific requirement. Most stations average around 6 percent of their time in the public service field, but this involves the entire spectrum of community life.

Station management looks for public service broadcasting which will (a) not drive viewers away, and (b) help attract new viewers. The audience is fickle and will change channels within forty seconds if a given show fails to grab their attention.

In view of the above, consider the station's broadcast format when designing or marketing any given program but, more importantly, design programs for the largest possible potential audience. For example, the number of church persons in southern California is a comparatively small reservoir from which to draw an audience. Therefore, shows should be designed which will attract not only the confirmed churchgoers, but which might also attract skeptics, church drop-outs, and others who may even have a quarrel with the church. The greater the potential audience appeal, the better likelihood of getting good time-slots.

3. Television viewers expect action. They are accustomed to fast-moving drama and even fast-paced newscasts. Since conflict is at the heart of drama (and the resolution of conflict is the basic story line) build conflict into the program design.

Church groups have argued long and loud against the overabundance of physical conflict on television. The continued presence of physical violence is a tribute both to the fact that it is easy to write and produce and to the fact that viewers continue to seek out shows with conflict.

Programs should be designed in a way that highlights the conflict present in the church and the society. Since physical conflict is to be avoided, seek out conflicting values, differing points of view, and ideas which are in basic contradiction to one another. In other words, heighten the conflicts present in the world of religion, in order to draw the viewer into the debate. Involve the viewer, and you will keep the audience.

Church groups universally dislike conflict and generally tend to smooth over differing viewpoints in order to "keep the peace." However, two of the following proposals will recommend that the unique contributions of the contemporary church be stated forthrightly if they are to compete in the marketplace of ideas offered by television. If the position of the church is to be

compromised for the sake of harmony, the church will lose not only its integrity but its audience as well. We could simply bore them to death.

CHAPTER VII

PROPOSALS FOR PROGRAMMING

TREATMENT FOR A PROPOSED THIRTEEN-WEEK TELEVISION
SERIES: ABackground

Subject. Major Religious Bodies Deal with Issues of Contemporary Life.

Working Title. "Values in Conflict."

Rationale. The major religious bodies of the United States and their regional components conduct regular, disciplined study of major issues related to life in the modern world. Their attempts to apply their basic religious insight and philosophy to current events is often misunderstood and frequently controversial.

The religious bodies of America have long been one of the major ethical influences in our culture. A program which helps to interpret their understanding of the contemporary scene could contribute to a heightened moral sensitivity within the culture itself. Because of the sometimes controversial nature of the subject matter and of the differences within the religious community, the program could be expected to draw significant audience attention.

Potential viewing public. The natural audience for this program would be church members themselves; however, the potential audience for such a show would be much larger than those actively involved in the religious community. Since the issues involved would be of a significant, contemporary nature, viewers could be expected to include all persons who give time or attention to current events and the resolution of diverse social questions.

Expectations. There are four legitimate expectations of this program.

1. The program will create an increased awareness of the positions which religious bodies have taken on the issues under consideration and the process involved in coming to their conclusions.

2. The program will result in a heightened sensitivity to the importance of public discussion of and involvement with the issues which shape the society in which we live.

3. The program will recognize the diversity which often exists within the religious community itself, and will suggest a philosophical or religious base for making ethical decisions in a pluralistic culture. The religious bodies will not always be in agreement with one another, much less with their constituents or the

viewing audience. The dialogue will highlight conflicting values and the ambiguous nature of many public issues.

4. Finally, the program will in and of itself create controversy among those who do not feel that religious bodies should get involved in public issues. This conflict, plus the conflict of ideas and values under discussion, should generate high audience interest.

Approach. Each show will deal with one specific issue of contemporary life. Representative positions or policy statements of major religious bodies will be reviewed and discussed. Three panelists (with expertise on the issue under discussion) will give feedback among themselves and respond to comments from in-studio guests. Qualified representatives of religious bodies with differing positions would be invited to respond on a later show.

Format. The issue of the day would be introduced by "teasers." Use could be made of filmed footage related to the issue (source: newsroom). In-studio "guests" will be interviewed for spontaneous questions and comments, e.g., "My name is Mary Brown, and I'm a United Methodist. I want to know what the Methodist Church [sic] is doing about homosexuality." "My name is Sam Jones, and I want to know why the Presbyterians favor

forced busing of school children." As an alternative, an individual could state the problem in very personal terms.

For example, "I have always tried to follow the moral values of my church, but I don't know what to do right now. My wife has been in a coma for two years, and machines are keeping her alive. To put it bluntly, I am starving for human companionship. Now my church is opposed to mercy killing, so I cannot in good conscience 'pull the plug.' But my church is also opposed to divorce, even though I believe that my wife would want me to take that course, as I would want her to do if our situations were reversed. So, what to do . . . commit adultery . . . or suffer on through? If I listen to the church, she doesn't have the right to die, and I don't have the right to live."

A moderator will outline in brief (two minutes) the positions taken by one or more religious bodies. Where strong differences of positions occur, i.e., birth control or abortion, each position should get a full hearing.

A panel of three persons will have the opportunity to respond to the official positions stated above. one of the respondents would represent the religious bodies whose position is under discussion. No more than a two-minute response would be expected from any

participant, but approximately five minutes would be allowed for dialogue among the panel when each has had an opportunity to state a position.

Finally, in-studio "guests"--a studio audience, if possible--would be encouraged to challenge, question, or affirm the position of the religious groups involved or respond to members of the panel.

The program would be concluded by a statement recognizing that

all may not agree on the positions taken, but all will certainly agree that this is a subject of major importance. The purpose of this broadcast has been to encourage continuing discussion of this issue and to raise some of the ethical issues involved in the current debate.

Of critical importance. A skillful moderator will be required to make certain that the program generates more light than heat and to guarantee that participants will disagree without becoming disagreeable. Strict ground rules for guests should be clearly understood by all participants. It is of primary importance that the participants convey a sense of tolerance for divergent points of view, as well as a responsibility for ardently championing one's own position. This goal must be observed even when disagreements are keen, for this is the hallmark of the democratic process. In-studio guests should be recruited on the basis of the expertise on the issue to be discussed, as well as their ability to speak

as churchpersons who are cognizant of the ethical dimensions of the question at hand.

Topics to Be Covered

1. The role of the church in society. The first program would initiate the debate over the role of the church in society. On the one hand, there is the "separatist" or pietistic position which sees the church as related solely to the "spiritual" concerns of humankind. On the other hand, there is the argument that the church has not only the right but also the responsibility to be deeply involved in the affairs of the community: politics, economics, the arts, and all social expressions of life.

2. The "right to die in dignity." The California "Right to Die" law will be outlined and distinguished from the general arguments on euthanasia (mercy-killing). The positions of religious bodies, pro and con, will be examined. The California statute is a moderate attempt to assure a semblance of "death with dignity." Where do churches differ on the meaning of death and the way in which dying should be lived? What are the effects of these positions on the patient and on the family?

3. School desegregation. School desegregation has been in progress across the United States for

twenty-five years. Los Angeles public schools are under court order to proceed with desegregation plans in 1978. Some churches are establishing parochial schools in order to create alternatives to cross-town busing planned by the Los Angeles City Board of Education. Other churches are affirming the public schools and refuse to allow parochial programs which might be in conflict with desegregation moves. Where are the churches on this issue, and what guidance can they give our city?

4. Human sexuality. The church has had strains of puritanism (and sometimes prudishness) throughout much of its history. Some of these elements continue with institutional approval. In other instances, denominations are revising previous appraisals of issues related to human sexuality. Anita Bryant and conservative groups are fighting "gay rights." Other churches, such as the United Church of Christ, are associating the issue with human rights in general. What are the reasons for these two dramatically different points of view? How will issues of sexuality relate to ordination in the mainline churches? Is the Presbyterian experience normative? What resources have denominational bodies found to be most influential in shaping their opinions? How are members of local congregations coping with this issue?

5. Urban life. The modern city is one of the

major dilemmas in American life today. Urban growth is quickly followed by urban decay. Yesterday's suburbs are tomorrow's slums. Poverty and hunger breed violence and crime. An inadequate tax base provides inadequate human services. An inflated tax base drives people out of the city or makes heroes out of men like Howard Jarvis. The churches have long held a vision of the city as "holy." Where is that vision now, and how are churches addressing the critical issues involved? To what extent are urban problems racial problems? To what extent economic? How do the churches define "responsible citizenship" in today's cities? And what is today's religious vision for "the holy city"?

6. The changing role of women. The continuing evolution of alternative life-styles for women in the society has created dramatic changes in the church and in the culture. The rising number of women in the work force has correspondingly lessened the number of women in the home. Even with the new options facing women today, there are many unresolved questions which are being addressed by major religious bodies. Some of these issues are involved with the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), such as equality of job opportunities and equal pay for equal work. Yet there are other issues related to the changing role of women which are not addressed by the ERA. The

conflict between the women who choose a new life-style and those who continue to see the woman primarily as wife and/or mother has resulted in unobvious warfare between these points of view both in the society and the culture. The social impact of single-parent families and the rights of the single parent are yet to be resolved. The family itself is in a process of evolution due to options available to women. In some instances families are emerging with new strength and wholeness; in other instances, the family is experiencing deterioration and stress.

Church groups differ markedly on these issues, with some encouraging the "liberation" of women and others calling on women to act as conservators of the old values. The conflict may be observed in areas of divorce, abortion, and the politicization of sex-role stereotyping. Caught in the middle is the woman seeking to define her real selfhood and self-interest. How are different churches dealing with these secular issues? How are the churches dealing with these issues internally, i.e., within their own organizations, in issues such as the ordination of women? How are churches working to help women caught up in conflicting and ambiguous values?

7. Human hunger. On a global scale there are

few more pressing issues than that of hunger. Within the past decade the spectre of starvation on a global scale has become an issue of increasing importance. The 70's have witnessed the dramatic and devastating tragedies of the Sahael and East Pakistan, but the undramatic, day-to-day struggle for survival of half the world's population is no less important.

In past generations the churches have sought to deal with hunger on the basis of relief: collecting baskets for "the poor" (locally) or through sending shiploads of foodstuffs to areas of crisis. Now it is apparent that the crisis cannot be localized; it is everywhere. Pockets of poverty within the United States experience the same desperation as nations of the third world. Religious bodies are recognizing that "band-aid" solutions to human hunger are forever more inadequate. The delivery of food is still required in some places as an emergency measure, but the deeper issues are systemic.

Some of the issues are economic: issues of distribution systems and competitive prices on the world market. Some of the issues are environmental, relating to the use of pesticides and the priorities set for land use and development. Other issues are related to lifestyle in the affluent nations of the world. Land used to produce feed for cattle (which supply the demand for

beef) could provide comparable nutritional value for six times as many people simply by changing the crop.

Churches have acted in many ways to spell out the ethical implications of this issue and to suggest alternatives for the society. What is the church doing about hunger? What are the specific changes in priorities and life-style suggested by major religious bodies? Where is the opposition coming from? What are the prospects for feeding the hungry, and what will it cost us in terms of our present standard of living?

8. Personal freedom and human dignity. In a world which is increasingly dominated by computers and bureaucracies, the individual citizen finds life to be increasingly depersonalized. Many of the most important issues in the life of the individual are determined for him by forces beyond his control. Court orders may determine where children go to school. Tax increases may force persons out of their homes, particularly if they live on fixed incomes. Job security is influenced less by a person's competence and effective performance than on contracts which may be awarded or withheld by corporate or governmental bodies thousands of miles away, or jobs may be eliminated altogether if mechanization becomes less expensive than individual employment. Welfare has become an unwanted way of life for many who see

no alternative. The individual is virtually powerless before these "outside" forces which are beyond his/her control. Individual members of a bureaucracy may be sympathetic to human need, but bureaucratic systems are rarely influenced by protest or motivated by individual compassion.

Some religious bodies are actively involved in community organization and political action to influence social change within bureaucracies. Others are working to restore some sense of human dignity in a world which seems to place more values on systems than on individual worth. What is the church doing? What are some of the results? Where is the opposition coming from? What kind of changes are occurring with the church itself to humanize its own systems? How are various religious bodies helping individuals to maintain a sense of their own self-worth?

9. The public sector vs. the private sector.

Historically the mainline Protestant denominations have championed the "social gospel" of Walter Rauschenbusch and worked for increasing governmental services within the society. This has always carried a measure of controversy; nevertheless, most religious bodies, from the denominations to the National Council of Churches, have been consistent supporters of the public sector.

Today, one out of every four employed Americans works for an agency of the government at some level. In the churches, the "New Dealers" and the "Fair Dealers" are gone. The "New Frontiersmen" and the "Great Society" people are suffering from disillusionment as newly adopted social programs have failed to solve the problems they were intended to address.

Where are the churches today vis-à-vis the public and private sectors? Do the churches still feel that governmental services are the most efficient and effective ways of dealing with massive social problems? Are there any changes in attitudes or positions which have characterized the churches' societal policies over the past forty years? Are the churches coming up with new proposals for resolving massive social problems, or are the churches committed to the present course as the most practical and effective options for the society? In brief, do the major religious bodies continue to defend public spending as the best investment of the public's money, or do the churches see other viable alternatives for improving the quality of the national life? Alternatives might include direct subsidies to individuals as an alternative to the welfare bureaucracy or governmental contracting with the private sector to do development and monitor specific kinds of programs. It might include a cutting back on governmental programs

altogether or it might focus on a diversion of current federal programs to state and local status with greater local involvement and control.

10. Religious freedom and deprogramming. The recent and rapid growth of religious cults and sects in the United States has caused concern among many mainline churches and their constituents. One of the reactions to the cult phenomenon has been the use of "deprogrammers" who take members out of the cult or sect and seek to restore them to their home and family. The techniques of the deprogrammer may include "aversion" or "brain-washing" tactics, and in some instances appear to have included kidnapping.

There are some church bodies which support deprogramming as a way of saving the person involved. The end does justify the means, these groups contend. In other instances, church bodies are opposing deprogramming as alien to religious freedom and contrary to First Amendment guarantees of conserving individual liberties. What are the rights of the individuals involved? What are the rights of the cults and sects, or of any religious group, against families or institutions in basic disagreement with their tenets. Are religious bodies, of whatever nature, constitutionally protected from such harassment, or is it permissible to single out "far out" groups

for this kind of treatment? In what ways are religious liberty and freedom of speech interrelated? Which religious bodies are involved in this controversy and how did they arrive at their positions?

11. Growing old in a youth-oriented culture.

Aging comes to all who are fortunate enough to live to maturity, but "growing old" can be degrading in a youth-oriented society. Particularly in southern California, where the emphasis is on newness, youth, and vitality, the self-esteem of older adults is frequently low. There are related issues of health, mandatory retirement, living on fixed incomes, and even sexuality. (Some older adults have found that remarriage following the death of a spouse can cost them Social Security or pension benefits. Thus, marriage may be economically unfeasible, and older couples often are forced to simply "live together" by economic necessity, but "without benefit of clergy.") Do retirement communities offer a "dream come true" of the good life, or are they simply "ghettoes of the old" which effectively remove older persons from the society until their ultimate demise?

What images of aging and maturity are offered by the religious community? How are older persons integrated into the life of the churches? Are they excluded or encouraged to participate in congregational life? How

are major religious bodies dealing with the issues of aging, retirement, remarriage (or the alternative), lifestyles, and economic hardship? Internally, are churches helping their own lay and clergy families through this transition to the "sunset years"? Is old age a rewarding experience, or is it a form of punishment?

12. Victimless crime. Many forms of human behavior which are now described by the society as victimless crime have been or continue to be described by religious bodies as "sins." Religious bodies have frequently supported legislation which would deter such behavior. Examples are many, but the major illustrations would be prohibition, and legislation affecting marijuana, prostitution and homosexuality.

Many law enforcement agencies are now taking the position that they are unable to defend persons against themselves and need to devote their understaffed agencies to crimes with "real" victims: e.g., robbery, assault, murder, and rape. Some religious bodies are supporting these decisions by law enforcement agencies. Other religious bodies are holding out for strong societal reinforcement of personal morality. How are the churches making these decisions? What are the factors which carry the most weight in their priorities? What efforts are churches making which would either support or contest

such decisions by law enforcement and judiciary bodies? To what extent are religious bodies revising their own moral codes to reflect changing social values regarding so-called "sinful" behavior?

13. The impact of television. The television broadcast industry has been called "the most powerful acculturating influence in American society." Television affects the purchasing habits of American consumers through its vast advertising power. T.V. also provides powerful images of behavior and life-role models which influence the viewing public. Adults and children alike are influenced, however subliminally, by these powerful images. Stereotyping of racial and sexual roles, the exposure to antisocial modes of behavior and the merchandising of everything from detergents to the television newsroom itself has a vast and cumulative effect on the culture.

Several mainline denominations have cooperated to deal with the role of television on a national basis. The National Council of Churches, on behalf of member denominations, lobbies with legislators and the Federal Communications Commission, to improve the quality of programming, as well as to upgrade management practices by individual broadcasters. What are the prime goals of the religious bodies in this campaign? To what

extent is such a campaign likely to be effective in such a powerful arena? What are the tactics of religious groups involved? How did the religious bodies come to their conclusions about this subject, and on what basis do they claim to intervene in the affairs of the broadcast industry? Is this, as broadcasters claim, an infringement of their own First Amendment Rights of Free Speech?

Other Considerations

The summaries above are intended to suggest some of the possibilities of the proposed series dealing with the religious community and social issues. It may be noted that half the issues selected deal with personal or private life and the other half deals with public issues which affect the broader society.

Additional topics, or replacement (or extension of the series) could include an examination of any of the following issues: human rights, the changing image of the male, church support of "liberation" movements in the Third World, or environmental concerns.

TREATMENT FOR A PROPOSED THIRTEEN-WEEK TELEVISION
SERIES: B

Background

Subjects. Individuals express their religious convictions in everyday life.

Working title. "A Living Faith."

Rationale. Personalities are the major commodity of mass media. Electronic and print media have recognized this crucial fact for years and have developed People Magazine and interview shows to capitalize on the public's thirst for probing into human lives.

Second only to the fascination of learning more about "personalities" in the news is a curiosity about "what makes people tick." The proposed new show will combine these two emphases to highlight the lives of individual members of the Southland religious community and the factors which have influenced their lives.

The show is designed to provide an in-depth look at public figures: politicians, entertainment celebrities, sports heroes, and other citizens making a contribution to the life of our community. The overview would examine in some detail the philosophy of life and the religious tradition which has helped to shape the life of the individual under consideration.

These individuals are not "soloists" doing their own thing in a random manner. They will be shown as part of a worshipping community. Their work will be shown as a natural expression of their religious convictions.

In the adoption of this format, the station will also be calling attention to, and paying tribute to, specific congregations of all faiths, and to the various religious communities of the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Potential viewing public. The audience could be expected to far surpass the viewers of current "public service" religion-oriented broadcasts which usually focus attention on a minister or "insider" in the field of religion. By examining prominent public figures, the show will attract new viewers who are interested in "personalities." The show will continue to draw viewers from the religious communities who are already watching the religion-oriented shows since their concern is with any program which touches on the religious perspective.

Since the roster of guests will draw on public figures in the sports world, the world of entertainment, and the field of politics, viewers with interests in these fields could also be expected to be attracted to the program. Since the show will also feature the involvement of the individual in civic life and community

institutions, the audience could be expected to include supporters of these institutions as well.

Expectations. Generally speaking, this show would be noncontroversial, and would cater to the public's appetite for role-models and heroes. The show would tend to reinforce the role of the religious community in helping provide civic/public leadership and influence community life. Anticipated results would include at least some measure of counteracting a culture based primarily on hedonism and selfishness with a positive picture of religiously motivated persons who care for others in the broader community.

Approach. Each show will focus on a specific individual. The major factors in that person's life and role will also be highlighted, including interviews with family members, co-workers, the spiritual leaders of the congregation and faith of which he or she is a part.

The show would also feature a three- to five-minute segment on the congregation itself, at worship and at work, to show the individual as a part of a larger (social) group with shared commitments and concerns.

Format. The heart of the show would be a fifteen-minute in-studio interview with the subject. The interview would cover major questions about his/her life, goals, motivations, viewpoints and role in the community.

The interview itself would be built around other components of the program which would examine the religious background which helped to shape this person. These would include a joint interview with the subject and his/her pastor/rabbi/priest (three to five minutes). A one- to two-minute statement from the spiritual leader of the faith or denominational group represented would tie individual commitments to historic concerns of the religious community. A three- to five-minute segment would place the subject in the context of the family: hobbies, spare time interests, family activities. Another three to five minutes would be devoted to the working environment of the subject and interviews with colleagues and co-workers on the job or in community activities.

With the exception of exterior shots (local church, home, place of work), which could be obtained with a minimum of difficulty, the remainder of the show could be produced on an in-studio basis. No special props would be required.

Proposed Interviews

Mayor Thomas Bradley. Bradley is an active member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. His religious background has had a major impact on his commitments in public life.

Los Angeles Dodger Steve Garvey. Garvey is a devout Roman Catholic. The personal commitment to his religion has been a source of some comment and controversy within the Dodger organization. His determination to be an exemplary person is an expression of his own moral conviction. Wouldn't you like a closer look at "Mr. Clean"?

T.V. Weatherman Dr. George Fishbeck. Fishbeck is a regular Lay Preacher in Lutheran churches all over the Southland and serves on the denomination's communications agency. Well known as a teacher and scientist, Fishbeck's religious commitments are spelled out in much of his personal lifestyle and commitments.

Los Angeles City Councilwoman Joy Picus. Mrs. Picus has been an active member of Conservative Temple Ali Yah since its founding more than a decade ago. In addition, she has served in a staff position with the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation Council of Los Angeles. Her religious commitments have been a major factor in her community activities and her political life.

Union Organizer Caesar Chavez. Chavez' roots as a youngster growing up among migrant workers have always been intertwined with the Roman Catholic Church. His

religious faith has been exhibited in vocational commitments and sacrificial lifestyle which have made him one of the best-known religious heroes of the twentieth century. The impact of religion of the Farm Workers Movement and the cooperation of Protestant bodies with Chavez' movement could be featured as well.

General Manager of CBS Television City Charles Cappelman. Cappelman is the man behind the scenes in the production of much of CBS television. In addition, he is President of the Board of Managers of United Methodist Communications and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Goodwill Industries. Cappelman is an active member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Tarzana, California, and his public and private commitments are natural expressions of his religious life. (In case of a conflict of interest with the sponsoring station, an alternative might be the following.)

KFI General Manager James Wesley. Wesley is Vice President and General Manager of the most powerful radio station in Los Angeles. He is active in civic affairs, and has been named by Los Angeles Magazine one of the most influential media persons in the city. He also serves on the Radio Standards Committee of the National Association of Broadcasters. An active Presbyterian, Wesley's religious commitments influence almost all

aspects of his public life.

Other Considerations

Surveys would be taken of major religious bodies in Los Angeles for nominees to be interviewed. Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities would be invited to suggest the most interesting/controversial persons in their various constituencies to be the subjects of an interview. Candidates would be selected on the basis of their own expertise in a given field, as well as the particular contribution they could make to a balanced format, e.g., no overdose of United Methodists, ethnic and racial composition, and representation of female as well as male subjects. Final selection of guests would be made in consultation with the station involved.

TREATMENT FOR A PROPOSED THIRTEEN-WEEK TELEVISION
SERIES: C

Background

Subject. Religious belief is changing to meet the needs of changing times.

Working title. "Mainliners."

Rationale. The "Old Time Religion" may have been good enough for father and mother, but it is not adequate for growing numbers of persons in the contemporary world. While some continue to find security in an unexamined faith, there is a growing movement within and without the bounds of organized religion to explore new meanings of ancient traditions and fresh ways of viewing ancient truths.

Some of the most committed persons within the established religions are leading the movement to totally reexamine every premise and postulate of the religious heritage in order to find an appropriate, contemporary expression of "the faith of our fathers." This movement toward a religious style which carries emotional power as well as intellectual integrity has its roots in the liberalism of the nineteenth century and has been given expression in the work of major theologians for nearly fifty years.

Probably 80 percent of the clergy trained since 1950 have been exposed to a new theological style, yet the new concepts rarely get across to the average churchgoer or to the secular culture which is also seeking meanings of its own. The result is that nearly two generations of breakthroughs in the world of religious thought have been virtually hidden from public view unless sensationalized in the media, e.g., the "Death of God" controversy of the 60's.

United Methodist theologian, John Cobb, of the School of Theology at Claremont, has stated that less than 20 percent of the working "theologians" today are "theists." That is, they do not define God as a "being" of some sort. (Contrast this with Gallup polls which show that 90 percent of the American people believe in a "supreme Being.") The contributions of these theologians and their suggestions for a new understanding of the role of religion is seldom heard in or outside of church.

Potential viewing public. As indicated by the list of subjects which follows, many of the topics under consideration would have broad personal impact on churchgoers and nonchurchgoers alike. Other topics would deal with less personal applications but would continue to hold the interest of anyone who had argued the

"forbidden" questions raised by skeptics in all ages--in dormitory bull sessions or in "kaffee klatches" around a kitchen table. In the United States, and particularly in southern California, "religion" (not "church") is a cultural phenomenon and the subject of general social interest. The religious quest has resulted in a variety of styles of searching in our culture, and this program would represent the best efforts of the major Protestant bodies to join in that quest.

Expectations. This series would propose to examine, over a thirteen-week period, the most important tenets of the Judeo-Christian heritage with the hope of clarifying and interpreting these beliefs in ways which are comprehensible in the modern world.

The series is not intended to be sectarian, nor is it intended to be "evangelistic." It is rather an interpretive and educational program, which will shed light on the most important changes in the development of religious thought to occur in the past two thousand years. These are changes which are largely unknown to the general public.

Approach. Two prominent theologians will discuss a single issue each week. A moderator will keep the discussion lively and will field questions from a studio audience. The primary speakers will present their case

in nontechnical language to avoid a pedantic or "graduate school" exclusiveness. Every issue will be oriented toward current Biblical scholarship, and each topic will receive a down-to-earth application.

Format. The show will revolve around a moderator who questions two guest theologians about recent developments in theology which would be of interest to the average churchgoer. The issues would also be of concern to nonchurchgoers who wrestle with the same issues but who may not use "religious" categories to describe the issue. There would be three podiums on camera, in much the same style of the presidential debates of the 1970's. An initial statement by the moderator would be followed by responses from two differing theological perspectives. However, the participants would not be engaged in debate so much as in complementing one another's presentations, elaborating and clarifying one another's statements as seems appropriate.

The moderator would raise the issue and address questions to each of the special resource persons for reply. Following approximately eighteen minutes of give-and-take from the experts, members of a studio "audience" would be encouraged to enter into dialogue, raising additional questions and seeking clarification of earlier statements.

Topics

The good skeptic. The opening segment should establish the character of the entire series. In a sense, the series is dedicated to the "doubting saint," St. Thomas. The first episode will establish the fact that it is o.k. to doubt and that most of the important discoveries in all fields have been made by those unwilling to accept generally accepted ideas and truths. According to Paul Tillich, the "Protestant principle" is one of continued reevaluation of the Christian faith and life.

The progressive developmental states of religious belief will be examined in the manner of French theologian Jacques Ricour. Experience-myth-dogma, followed by disbelief and rediscovery of truth, will be the pattern outlined. That is, in most religious traditions, persons discover a truth through lived experience. They tell stories or create mythologies which capture and communicate the truth. As time passes, the stories are turned to dogmas, which in turn lead to so-called skepticism. Finally, the truth is rediscovered in other human lives and is frequently renamed--leading to new stories, new dogmas, and new skeptics--and sometimes new religions.

The guest theologians will show that most skepticism about religion is not related to the original experience of a truth but to dogmatic pronouncements

which may not even be related to human experience. The task of the panel will be to trace the progression backward in order to recover one or two basic insights of scripture which have been lost in the contemporary culture.

Finally, it will be shown that it requires real courage (faith) to be a genuine skeptic, for the doubter is most aptly characterized as a seeker who is convinced that there is a truth which is not apparent in the commonly accepted articles of religion.

The Bible: Truths vs. facts. This program will follow up on the insights of the first show and will demonstrate that the Bible is filled with stories which are intended to convey the truth of human experience. It is of primary importance to note that these truths are the only real concern of Biblical scholarship. Indeed, the truths were the only real concern of the authors themselves.

Using the work of Rudolph Bultmann as the basis for discussion, panelists will show that prescientific peoples were convinced that they lived in a three-story universe. Thus their stories are told within the context of that premise. Bultmann says that mythology is a prescientific way of telling a truth. To describe the Bible as highly mythological is not to suggest that it is

somehow at fault; rather, it is a way of recognizing that this book is qualitatively different from most other books encountered in our culture. It must, therefore, be treated differently. Demythologizing is the technical scholarly term for seeking out truths among "facts" which make little sense in the modern world.

The viewing audience will be assured that it is o.k. to question the "facts" in search of truths which can be tested and validated in our own experiences.

God as ultimate meaning. Biblically speaking, anything which can be defined is something less than God. Using the theological methodology of H. Richard Niebuhr, panelists will review Biblical connotations of God as "Mystery," "Other," and "Unknown."

The various entities to which human beings often attribute "ultimate" status will be summarized (the nation, race, power, money, and sex). These "little gods" will be shown as components of the Mystery which life is, each with its own value. Incarnational theology sees each part of life as manifesting "the holy" without, however, exhausting the meaning of the Divine.

Panelists will also demonstrate the negative effects of ascribing a value to any "thing" which is out of proportion to its real worth. For example, giving oneself absolutely to the nation is a first step toward

tyranny. Indeed, absolute devotion to any aspect of life is the subordination of other values, as well as the subordination of the self.

The rejection of "little gods" (idolatries) leads to the recovery of the unique value of the self and the establishment of a broad perspective for living. The development of a larger commitment to Life's Mystery and a trust of the Unknown offers the individual an openness to Life and a new sense of wonder.

Jesus Christ: Unique or universal? This segment will outline the role of Jesus and the meaning of Christ in contemporary theology. Using the Biblical base, panelists will describe the way in which allegiances to lesser gods have separated humankind from God and prevented a genuine participation in life.

Lesser gods will be described in terms of fantasy (the Messiah), nostalgia (Israel's past glories), and security (the status quo).

The role of Jesus will be described as one who challenged these commitments and who called others to find God's kingdom "in their midst." The meaning of Christ will be outlined as liberator, in the sense that he embodied "the truth which set men free." It was precisely his call for basic decisions about life and truth which provided opportunities for rethinking their lives

(repentance) and overcoming their alienation from God (salvation).

The theology of Paul Tillich, along with that of H. R. Niebuhr, will be the guiding principles for this discussion.

The segment should conclude by suggesting common experiences in our own time which cause persons to rethink their commitments and overcome the alienation in their lives. Many contemporary theologians would call these "Christ Events." Such events point to the universal nature of the Christ experience, of which Jesus has been the prototype for Christians. It would also indicate that experiences which Christians describe in their own terms are experiences which are common to much of humankind.

Sin and salvation. The general public has become accustomed to hearing radio and television preachers deal with the subject of "sin." Sin has come to be interpreted as any one of a number of evil acts or nasty habits. However, most contemporary Biblical scholarship sees sin as describing a rupture in the relationship between God and the individual, rather than some particular action. The theology of Paul Tillich is succinct in describing sin as alienation from God, self, and others.

If sin is alienation, then salvation as described

by Tillich, is reconciliation with self, others, and God. Specifically, salvation does not mean that you won't go to hell (a mythological description of separation from God, based on the concept of a three storied universe). It does not mean that the individual will go to heaven (a mythological description of reunion with God, based on the concept of a three storied universe).

Salvation has to do with the sense of oneness with life in its concreteness and its mystery. This sense of unity occurs when an individual declares a truce with life and affirms his/her life and future on amicable terms. The individual sees all of life as holy, as a gift, and embraces the known and unknown as expressions of the reality of God. It is this reconciliation which is the work of Christ.

The new being: The life of Faith. There is much talk in today's society about "Born Again" Christianity. Politicians, movie stars, and convicted felons testify to dramatic experiences which have changed the course of their lives. For the most part, mainline Christianity is a great deal more reserved in describing "the new life in Christ." The theology of Soren Kierkegaard is most helpful in pointing to the ambiguities of the human experience. Depth psychology and historical experience, not to mention Biblical witness, confirm the fact that the

finest of the saints carry within themselves a dark side which constantly seeks expression.

What is the nature of the life of the new Christian? It is not exempt from temptation, error, or even a return to past patterns of alienation. Being "born again" is a continuing process and is the recurring theme of the Christian life. Although charismatic spokespersons describe this as a once-in-a-lifetime experience, the new theologians see life in a more existential manner: lived from moment-to-moment, with each day providing new opportunities for recommitment to the good or a lapse into subhuman behavior.

To be born again is to experience a turn-around (conversion) in one's life. It is to live with a full awareness that life may turn again and again. It is to live with the confidence that the reconciliation with life, others, and self which one has experienced will continue to remain an open possibility in all the straits and rigors of human life.

Ethics and human behavior. The Puritan heritage of Protestantism in the United States has tended to identify ethical norms with the prudish style of life, but the ethical debates of major contemporary theologians abandoned this position at least a generation ago.

To be sure, there are personal and private ethical norms which are championed by almost every segment of the church, but for the most part these are cultural norms as well. Honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, et al. are virtues known to every Boy Scout.

As early as 1927 Reinhold Niebuhr was suggesting that the goal of justice was to the public sector what the goal of love represented among individuals. And the questions of justice have yet to be resolved. Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave his life on behalf of an ethic which defied the Nazi establishment; he also embraced the concept of violence in the plot to kill Hitler. Today issues of global hunger and escalating weapons systems among nations are two of the major ethical concerns of national church bodies. At a personal level, the former issue may be stated in terms of the question: "Is it just for me (my nation) to consume disproportionate amounts of the world's resources while millions live at a level near starvation?" The task of ethics is to define "responsible" conduct of individuals and groups.

Prayer in a disenchanted world. Prayer has served for centuries as the process through which major decisions have been made in the religious community. To pray is to seek the will of God, sustenance for the day, and to commit oneself into God's hands (to use an

anthropomorphic metaphor).

As the discipline of seeking the will of God, prayer is a many-faceted experience. Much of the prayer on radio and television religion would seem to reduce this discipline to a form of exorcism: a process in which a person's will is revealed to God in order that God might better serve the desires of the individual.

In a disenchanted world, prayer carries no connotations of magic. Rather, prayer is the experience of pondering the known and unknown characteristics of the holy. It is the process of weighing relative values and threading through the shades of grey in human behavior. Prayer is the private search for personal meaning and direction. It is also the corporate expression of the collected hopes and values of the community. In public, prayer is the symbolic act which carries its own shorthand of the religious identity. Resources for this segment range from the pioneering works of George Buttrick and Fred Gaely to the experimental ventures of the Ecumenical Institute.

Other Considerations

The eight sketches above are more than enough to suggest the content for the new series. If the series finds acceptance, these can be fleshed out further and the remaining themes can be developed. Other suggested

topics include "Forgiveness and Liberation," "Suffering and the Will of God," "Healing and Wholeness," and "Easter: the Mystery of Life and Death."

It should be restated that this program would require a major commitment on the part of any television station considering its production. Such a series would undoubtedly bring recriminations from some of the very churches which have made these studies possible. The problem, as stated earlier in the proposal, is simply this: many of those clergy and laypersons alike who have remained in the churches have done so because they were comfortable with what they found.

At the same time, it may be pointed out that any station willing to risk this series will find an excited audience for new insights and genuine "public service" will have been performed.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUDING UNSCIENTIFIC POSTSCRIPT:

WHAT HAS HOLLYWOOD TO DO WITH JERUSALEM?

The relationship between Hollywood, the center of the motion picture and television industries, and Jerusalem, the symbolic home of Judeo-Christian history and tradition, may be explored on many levels. For the purpose of this study, the discussion will be limited to two levels: the theological and the institutional goals of the Christian community. It will become clear in the following that there are urgent concerns which inevitably bind the two together in the contemporary world.

WHAT IS JERUSALEM?

To speak of Jerusalem is to speak of the locus of the ministry of Jesus. Jerusalem is the constant reminder that Jesus was involved in living history and social structure. Jesus' ministry was a ministry in life, about life, and for the living.

The stated premise of this essay is that the gospel of Jesus Christ tells the truth about life: what makes life whole; what cheapens or detracts from life's meaning; what nourishes and heals. To the extent that the gospel does indeed tell the truth about life, to

that extent is the Church involved meaningfully with humankind.

To speak of God, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, is to speak of a god revealed in life and history. The God of the Old and New Testaments is discovered, and acknowledged, in the creation of the law, in the building of kingdoms, in the enforcement of justice, in the cross, in the "least of these" our neighbors, and even in the approach of the armies of an enemy.

The Church claims that the gospel is both an interpretation of life and, at the same time, the true interpretation of its meaning. From the creation stories of Genesis, and God's declaration of life's goodness, to the pain of the crucifixion (described as a part of God's plan of salvation) "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." The goodness of life is not a quality to be found in spite of hardship; rather it is inherent in life because God is always present, and meaning may be both discovered and affirmed in all places and times.

The incarnation means precisely that in a difficult world, God is present and humankind can find meaning and rejoice. Jesus faces his own desperate situation with just such a posture: "What shall I say? 'Father save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour." Purpose and fulfillment may be found in the affirmation of life, as it is given and received.

The affirmation of life does not simply mean accepting life as it is. Perceiving realistically is, however, the first step toward fashioning an appropriate response.

What are the realities of life to which the gospel points? Three or four additional suggestions will have to suffice for the purpose of this discourse.

1. Every human life has intrinsic value. Is this not the final implication of the incarnation? "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me." Jesus and the Father are one, and Jesus and his brethren/sisters are no less united. Can anyone, therefore, say that any living being is less than sacred?

2. Life itself is de facto good and full of promise. The world, filled with men and women who reflect God's own image, is a place of wonder and possibility. The most profound expressions of our regard for the sacred are found in our relationships with others, and these relationships provide the foundation for the growth and nurture of the human spirit.

3. Life holds no grudges, and the future is always yet to be determined. The past has no intrinsic power over the present. Although the events of prior life and history have shaped the options which produced today's experience, decisions made this day will also shape the options for the future. It is impossible to

escape the influence of the past, but that influence is not without limits. And the limits are met whenever an individual or a culture makes new decisions which influence the future in new ways. The meanings of forgiveness and liberation are rediscovered in experiences which history validates anew with each generation.

4. The fantasies and illusions of individuals and nations will be shattered by the realities of life's limitations. Scripture is nowhere more clear than in the proclamation that illusion is no protection from life's reality. Indeed, if the reality of life is the dwelling place of the holy, illusion is the chief factor in the alienation which exists between humanity and God. To fantasize about the past or future is to avoid contact with the present reality, and illusion is the condition which most often separates humankind from the holy. God is unconditionally a part of human experience, but the human inclination is to establish conditions for the presence of the Most High. Scripturally the tendency is disclosed in a nation's belief that salvation will occur when certain conditions are met: when the messiah comes, or when the tower is completed, or when the battle is won, or when the journey has been completed. Individuals postpone purpose and fulfillment until ambitions are achieved or until health is restored or until help is forthcoming. But over and over again, the tower is

toppled or the messiah is slain or the journey is forfeit, only to expose the conditional affirmation of life as counterfeit and to proclaim the presence of the holy in our midst.

Human life has intrinsic value, but some people doubt themselves and disdain others. Life is good, but some people cannot affirm it. The future is yet to be determined, but some people do not believe it. Life holds no grudges, but some people greet each day carrying past guilts and neuroses born of past experience.

Reality exposes the limitations of illusion, but fantasy life is the bulwark of an escapism which sometimes seems the moral equivalent of a national pastime. The establishment of preconditions for a meaningful life is accepted as a social norm.

Whether speaking of the primitive mythology of Babel or the Biblical images of salvation, whether describing the rampant consumer ethic or the worship of the nation state, prehistory and current history read much the same. In the final analysis, man is not God.

People called Jesus "the Christ" because he delivered them out of their alienation from the God revealed in life and history. He was described as deliverer because he embodied the truths which constituted the "good news." In this sense, Jesus was "the Word made flesh,"

and inescapable. To be confronted by him was to be forced to decide about the truths one lived by.

And some said yes to him; and some said no. Those who rejected the truth which he embodied finally had him executed.

And those who said "yes" found Jerusalem to be a holy place indeed.

WHAT IS HOLLYWOOD?

Hollywood comes as close to being the cultural center of the Western hemisphere as any other conceivable location. In terms of cultural impact Hollywood has no rival, not even a close one. First through motion pictures, and now through the medium of television, Hollywood has been the interpreter of the American culture for more than three decades, not only for the American people, but overseas as well.

Hollywood has provided a mirror, reflecting American life, as well as a weathervane pointing to new directions in American behavior. Happenings in Hollywood have been precursors to adaptations in almost every other part of the world. Music, fashion, and behavioral trends begin here and find their expression through the media of the city.

In any traditional sense of the word, artists abound in Hollywood. Authors, poets, playwrights,

musicians, actors, and painters--young and old, aspiring and successful--come to Hollywood like moths to a light. There is probably more sheer talent in this community than ever assembled in any one place in the history of the globe. Hollywood rewards its artists well.

The technology of the arts has been perfected here to new heights. In terms of sheer complexity, compare the time and skills required to produce a "Star Wars" or a "Battlestar Gallactica" with the painting of the Sistine Chapel. To use another image, compare the talent and hours involved in producing the musical scores for motion picture and television productions for a year with any other output of musical composition at any other place or any other time. The output is incredible. But is it art?

The function of the artist in any society has been defined as that of describing the truth about that society. The artist, therefore, is both interpreter and harbinger of cultural meanings. In Hollywood, however, the roles of artist and entertainer have become blurred. In earlier days, the entertainer was never considered to be an artist. The jester had a purpose in the court: to entertain. The purpose of the artist was of another order altogether: to illumine, to create, perhaps to inspire. But for better or for worse, whether entertainment or art, Hollywood serves as the principal

mirror of the society and has become the most important center of acculturating influence in the world.

Make no mistake about it. Hollywood, like the gospel, is about life, and the motion picture and television industries constitute the biggest pulpits in the land. Like a thousand sermons, the television programs differ in vision and direction, but cumulatively they describe an interpretation of life which is producing fearsome congregants. The Surgeon General of the United States has documented that children who are heavily involved in television viewing are generally more fearful about their world than children who watch relatively little t.v. The celluloid and videotape media alternately show a world which is violent and frightening, inane and superficial, or slapstick and cynical. Above all, the world of the media is consumer oriented and materialistic.

Make no mistake about it. The media capital of the world is the purveyor of meaning, and audiences are bombarded with images of self-fulfillment. Life will have meaning (you will be happy) if: you wear the right clothes, drive the right car, smell right, curl right, launder right, buy right, and have the right things. The ethic of Hollywood, with few exceptions, is the ethic of acquisition: you are what you have. These not so subliminal and none too subtle ethical imperatives are driven into the subconscious of the viewer until they become a part

of the make-up of the individual.

Values are formed vicariously, as audiences see what works for a wide variety of stars and superstars in a wide variety of situations. Life itself takes on a vicarious nature, since the average American spends more time watching television than in any other single activity than sleep (nearly forty-four hours per week at last count). Viewers vicariously experience pleasure and pathos, risk and adventure, fear and serenity through identification with such familiar characters as Charlie's Angels, the Waltons, and Mary Tyler Moore. The t.v. movies probe every possible realm of human life from rape and homosexuality to murder and international intrigue.

Hollywood (television broadcast journalism) is the source of the news for the majority of American citizens, and Hollywood is the primary factor in value formation for citizens of all ages. The motion picture industry itself, which has become the prime source for television production, even feeds feature films to television, once their box-office value has been drained off commercially. So the artists have been replaced by entertainers, and craftsmanship by technology, and the integrity of the artistic vision by a commercial rating system or box-office success. In the new capital of the arts, there is serious discussion of the television

commercial as a new art-form.

There are truths about life in Hollywood, but the questions which remain are significant. Are these truths which can set us free? Are the truths of Hollywood whole or partial truths? And can a partial truth become more dangerous than a lie? The culture capital of the world is nurtured through illusion and fantasy, and when fantasy becomes accepted as a staple truth, then that "truth" is the wall which separates humankind from reality.

Hollywood, the entertainment capital of the world, is also its illusion capital. The illusions are about life and the illusions are about Christianity itself. As earlier chapters have indicated, the media industry portrays a very narrow interpretation of Christianity for public consumption.

The above should not be seen as a uniform indictment of Hollywood. There are outstanding and sensitive artists at work in the industry. Occasionally their work reflects deep concern for the human values shared by the religious community.

In addition, the motion picture and television industries have dealt with subject matters previously taboo in the American culture, and it is not to the credit of the religious community that churches have been prime sources of opposition to the distribution and

exhibition of so-called mature themes. Mature themes need public exposure and discussion, and past generations of the church have attempted to suppress candid discussions of significant themes.

Finally, the media industry should not be judged by the goals of the church, but by its own goals. It is not the business of the mass media industry to evangelize or to otherwise do the work of the church. On the other hand, it is essential for the church to understand this influential segment of the society and to look at ways in which mass media can impede or enhance our work as Church.

WHAT HAS HOLLYWOOD TO DO WITH JERUSALEM?

The gospel of Jesus Christ brings a point of view about life, and the Church affirms this point of view as "truth." A Christian self-understanding of life affirms its goodness, its possibility, its openness and its humanness.

Hollywood represents a vast arena of conflicting images of life's meaning. Because of the pervasive influence of the broadcast media on the culture, these images may either be supportive of the gospel or may undermine the work of the church.

Media and Gospel

The challenge before the church is to find ways in which to deepen the message of the media and to find avenues for the expression of an adequate self-understanding for the viewer.

The task is not one of creating a sectarian medium, intent on producing a certain kind of "Christian," but of providing a holistic vision of life which will serve humankind well in the latter twentieth century. In other words, we do not want to baptize broadcasters and have them produce Christian propaganda. We simply want to help find ways to enable their art to truly reflect the nature of human life. If this should be achieved, even on a limited basis, the Church would have a strong ally in its own efforts to evangelize and make whole.

Indeed, the broadcast industry provides an unparalleled opportunity for "secular" evangelism: the communication of truth without dependency upon the language and forms of the Church itself. Can the broadcaster create images of life which reflect freedom and responsibility? Can the broadcaster convey the urgency of human suffering and need? Can the broadcaster suggest the meaning of accountability and reflect values which endure? If the broadcaster can capture and convey a vision

of life which enhances an individual's view of his/her potential for significant vocation, then the industry will have become the ally of the religious community.

The media have the capacity to convey the meaning of the times in which we live. The accurate and unflinching reporting of both good and bad "news" is the only basis for providing the public with enough information to make decisions. It is all too easy to exploit the viewer by focusing attention on the macabre and sensational, while at the same time effectively ignoring the continuing social crises of the generation. Yet unless the continuing, long-term, sometimes boring and seemingly insoluble issues are before us, we will forget them and assume that they have gone away. Nevertheless, the broader social issues, too large for any individual action, are only resolved by corporate social effort, and the media can help raise the consciousness of the nation to the critical agenda before the peoples of the globe.

If the Church should be able, through advocacy, resourcing, and persuasion, to help members of the broadcast industry move toward the goals suggested above, the Church would not only have served its own interests; in addition, the Church would have helped the industry move toward a recovery of its own integrity and the restoration of its own lost vision of the role of the artist in society.

Media and Church

On a more institutional level, the mainline Christian denominations need to vigorously pursue a new expression in broadcasting. As this paper has outlined above, mainline churches and their commitments are virtually invisible in the world of mass media. Current images of the church are largely either charismatic and fundamental or relegated to anecdotes or self-help programs.

The Church needs to be presented as a sociological phenomenon with a comprehensive sense of the issues of human life, both public and private. The Church should be shown as an educator for life's alternatives, as a resource for making basic decisions affecting the human family.

Current images of the Church in mass media make it easy for an educated audience to discount the contributions, or any potential contribution, which the contemporary church might make in human life. The narrow spectrum of the religious community which is currently visible to the television viewer is so remote from the mainstream of contemporary life as to be an oddity. These images are so far removed from the life of today's mainstream church as to constitute a genuine deception regarding the true nature of the majority of the

religious community.

The television industry represents the largest avenue of audience accessibility in the history of communications. It is, therefore, the "big pulpit" in the extreme. The electronic church, as it is sometimes called, can never replace the intimacy and support of the gathered community of believers; however, a broadcast ministry by the mainline churches could serve to encourage and to supplement, as well as to support, the work of the local congregation.

A mainline media ministry through high-quality, thoughtful programming is not only a proposal for interesting debate; it is, at the present time, a matter of institutional self-interest. Our aim is not to reach out and "get" the viewer for some parochial interest of our own. Our aim must be to reach out and touch the viewer with a vision of life which is holistic and responsible, as well as liberating and reassuring of life's finest possibilities. Such a ministry would not guarantee more members for our congregations, although it might make some open to exploring the possibilities of the institutional church. At least, it would not reduce the popular image of the church to a society of the lobotomized--a twentieth century curiosity--the relic of an ancient culture which has long since disappeared. And one must conclude that today's media image of the church leaves the

viewer little other choice.

Corporate Strategies Necessary

The question all boils down to this: What can a local group do to assist in the creation of a more thoughtful presentation of life's truth and a more accurate depiction of the nature of the contemporary church?

First the group can work on the question of program content. A local group can offer its own expertise to broadcasters as a resource to the media industry. The development of clear-cut statements on the major concerns of the religious community could be an asset for both writers and producers. As programs are created which deal with issues of concern to the religious community, we could offer consultants, knowledgeable about the issues involved.

The Church can also act as advocate for certain kinds of programming. Those of us who appreciate the fragile nature of the First Amendment will be suspicious of all kinds of censorship, even our own; but we can lobby forcefully for programming which offers positive social good or which will raise issues of substance before the larger community. The Church may act as critic, in the best sense of the word, not to negate the media but to praise and commend noteworthy contributions. As

critic, a Church-related body could inform the religious community about significant ventures in broadcasting and create networks to encourage viewing and feedback. The Church, as activist for human values, will encourage and support every worthwhile venture of the industry and will seek support from the larger community for risky ventures by innovative artists.

The Church must engage in program development in the field of religious broadcasting. As indicated above, such ventures not only constitute a needed ministry but are in our own self-interest as well. Above all, the mainline churches need to reclaim their own prerogatives as visionaries and keepers of the human dream.

There is no reason to attempt to get fundamentalists and charismatics off the air, but there is every reason to make certain that theirs is not the only voice in broadcasting which represents the Christian community. Choices for religious life-styles have never been more clear, but there has seldom been more confusion about what the choices are.

The church needs to appreciate more fully the diverse approaches and methodologies available in its relationship with the media community. At the present time, communications departments of major denominations seem to work almost in isolation from one another. Broader coordination of efforts and a deeper appreciation

for the gifts and contributions of sister churches are in order.

The United Methodists, the American Lutheran Church, and the Church of the Brethren have developed Television Awareness Training, a series of workshops for heightening the awareness of viewers. Other denominations can join in this effort. The United Church of Christ has pioneered in the field of communications law and has been at the forefront of legal actions to protect the interests of the general public, as well as of the religious community. All denominations can join in support of their efforts. The Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) has developed the most imaginative and influential children's religious program on the air, "Davey and Goliath." Our denominations can join in enthusiastic support and promotion of this type of effort. United Methodist Communications has worked with private industry to co-produce "Six American Families" and other documentaries for Public Broadcasting System, and the American Lutheran Church is producing a series on values for release beginning in early 1979. In addition, the churches need to forge coalitions with nonchurch groups which have overlapping commitments in the broadcast arena.

These efforts appear to be fragmented and uncoordinated, but ecumenical agencies are beginning to reach

the point where mutual support and joint planning will be possible.

Regional and national communications bodies will have to work hand in hand to coordinate efforts in advocacy, station and program monitoring, program placement, and the development of local support networks to make effective use of new strategies in mass media. Hopefully the Los Angeles experiment can serve as a model for other parts of the country as churches begin to gear up for the task of mass communications.

Most broadcasters seek a target audience and gear programming, advertising, and promotion to that group. Demographers carefully plot out the age and income groups most likely to be interested in any given show and time slot. Advertisers study these statistics, along with the ratings, in order to determine where to invest their advertising dollar. In a very real sense, the church has no such luxury. The religious community has no special "target" or interest group. It is impossible for a demographer to select an audience for us, since it is axiomatic with us that "all of every age and station stand in need of the means of grace. . . ."

We are, therefore, committed to efforts to reach the young and the old, the poor and the well-to-do, the single and the family, the up-and-coming and the down-and-out. This goal will require multiple broadcast

strategies and a variety of approaches: a combination of religious and secular broadcasting and a variety of involvement strategies, as suggested above. These factors will not make the job easier, but they will make the task more challenging and exciting. We have had a vision of life's truth for nearly two thousand years, and now the technology is available to share that truth with virtually every person alive.

Conclusion

The mainline churches must put themselves on the line if anything is to come of all this, and the actions must be taken quickly. One short story will illustrate the urgency of our situation.

The Rev. Ben Armstrong of the National Religious Broadcasters Association addressed a group in southern California this year. Armstrong described the evangelicals' commitment to broadcasting, saying that there are thirty-five evangelical television stations in the country at the present time, and new ones are being opened on the average of one each month. Evangelicals are opening radio stations on the average of one each week.

Armstrong went on to describe the work of evangelicals overseas, where 128 evangelical transmitters are currently in operation. He spoke of a 450,000 kilowatt station being built off the coast of India. Armstrong

maintains that the station will reach every part of the subcontinent.

The following week I mentioned Armstrong's comments to a friend from India. He replied that with a station like that, the Indian people will soon come to believe that Christianity is whatever the broadcaster says it is. There will be no other voice capable of debating the issue. It occurred to me that a century of missionary work, schools and hospitals, and witnessing to the gospel by mainline churches could be nullified within eighteen months of these broadcasts. The painstaking person to person ministries of the mainline churches will soon be overtaken by a single powerful voice espousing the evangelical and fundamental point of view.

An even more disturbing thought occurred on the heels of the first. That is exactly the phenomenon which we are currently experiencing in the United States. The evangelicals have taken over the air waves and are now in almost total control of religious images projected by mass media. It is they who define Christianity for the mass audience, and it is their message which is identified by that audience as the voice of the church.

Within a few years, if the trend is not reversed, the partial truths, the parochial mind-set, and the reductionistic viewpoint of the evangelical and charismatic will have become entrenched in the mind of the television

audience. As in India, there will be no voice to dispute their claim.

APPENDIX

FAST GAP IN DOCTRINE

Did Jesus Rise Bodily? Most Scholars Say No

BY JOHN DART
Times Religion Writer

True or false?

—Jesus did not regard himself as God made flesh and probably did not call himself the Messiah.

—Jesus did not rise bodily from the dead.

If you said "false," you are in step with popular understanding of the New Testament but out of step with

the prevailing views of most prominent biblical scholars.

This conclusion comes from interviews with U.S. scholars who reflect the teaching at all but the more conservative universities and theological schools.

The interviews also revealed the width of an enormous gap between contemporary New Testament studies and the assumptions of the general

public, even most churchgoers.

For instance, at the nine-school, Catholic and Protestant Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, which has the largest theological faculty in the world, New Testament professor Edward Hobbs said he didn't know of

one school there in which a significant part of the faculty would accept statements that Jesus rose physically from the dead or that Jesus was a divine being.

"Students come here in the first year, and many of them are shocked and ask why they weren't told," Hobbs said.

"The only answer is that many of the clergy are afraid, so they keep quiet about the things they learned in seminary," he said.

Please Turn to Page 20, Col. 1

20 Part I—Mon., Sept. 5, 1977

Los Angeles Times

Did Jesus Rise Bodily From Dead? Most Biblical Scholars Say 'No'

Continued from First Page

Hobbs was not the only scholar to blame the knowledge gap on the timidity of the clergy. Certainly such candor is rarely heard in the churches and seldom expressed in the news media, except to rebut the claims of supposedly radical professors and affirm the more traditional understanding.

Such reactions were seen this summer with the publication in Great Britain of "The Myth of God Incarnate," a collection of essays by seven British theologians. They said Jesus was best understood as "a man approved by God" (as he is described in Acts 2:22) for a special role in the divine purpose.

The concept of Jesus as God in the flesh "is a mythological or poetic way of expressing his significance to us," wrote the Rev. John Hick, a Birmingham University theology professor and editor of the book.

Hick told a news conference that virtually all scholars agreed that Jesus had not presented himself as divine "although many church members are not aware of this."

Coauthor Maurice Wiles, recently the chairman of the Church of England's doctrine commission, said the Christian Church "has never succeeded in offering a consistent or convincing picture" of Jesus as both fully human and fully divine.

Both churchmen and press commentators reacted sharply in England, and five other scholars rushed through a rebuttal book, "The Truth of God Incarnate." Both books will be put out soon by American publishers.

The Chicago-based Christian Century magazine said much of the outcry over the first book was undoubtedly due to the gap between the world of professional theologians and the world of church leaders and their flocks.

"It is a measure of the continuing insularity of British theology that the present controversy has been delayed until 1977," the magazine editorialized.

However, the "insularity" may not be typical only of England. Some news articles in this country have drawn heavily on conservative counterinterviews and downplayed the "liberal" conclusions.

Time magazine characterized the first book as typical of the attack "from the Christian left" on the divinity of Jesus over the last century and a half. The rebuttal book, says Time, draws together a "blue-ribbon panel" and presents "well-framed academic arguments."

'Maybe it's time we leveled with the public,' one scholar said.

American scholar Robert Funk, now head of Scholars Press and once executive secretary of the Society for Biblical Literature, said the "Myth" book sounded typically British.

"They don't get around to things until after the fact but they have a way of startling people when they do," he said.

Funk said it is possible that the seven theologians have inspired a new public debate. "Maybe it's time we leveled with the public" he added.

That's the message, too, from Rudolf Augstein, editor of Germany's

Der Spiegel, whose somewhat abrasive book, "Jesus, Son of Man," was published this year in English.

In an "afterword" to the book, the University of Michigan's David Noel Freedman, current president of the Society for Biblical Literature, said Augstein "is determined to expose the hypocrisy of the church; that is, the huge credibility gap between what its best minds have known for decades and what it nevertheless continues to teach and preach to the masses."

Some Bible interpretations that might seem radically new to nonspecialists are actually "old" ones.

One example is the opinion of scholars that Jesus did not claim to be a supernatural Messiah.

"I think, and most think, it is problematical that he claimed any such thing," said Van Harvey, newly appointed Stanford professor of religious studies.

Funk agreed, but said that at the same time there is "a large number of New Testament scholars who regard what Jesus thought about himself as unimportant."

What is more important, they say, is that Jesus' early followers were so impressed by his life, teachings and martyrdom that they tried to preserve that memory plus the reports/beliefs that God had somehow raised him from death to an exalted heavenly position.

Broadly assumed in New Testament research today is that the gospels are not "biographies" but narratives of Jesus' life, death and Resurrection as seen by writers whose accounts are colored by their own perspectives.

It is primarily the Gospel of John that has Jesus asserting his divinity. But that gospel is widely considered

to be unreliable—compared to the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke—as an aid to understanding the "historical Jesus."

"There is a growing consensus that many of the statements of Jesus are not to be regarded as literal statements of what Jesus said, but highly sophisticated restatements" in which the gospel writers try to convey Jesus' meaning, according to Leander Keck of Atlanta's Candler School of Theology.

Modern biblical criticism assumes that "all the stories were told in the service of worship and faith and that everything has gone through that filter," Keck said.

As for the Bible stories of a resurrected Jesus appearing to his disciples, some scholars refer to them as "Easter visions" or "dramatic imagery seen through the eyes of faith."

Even the most liberal theologians would not deny that the first Christians believed there was a Resurrection, but a "spiritual" one rather than a "physical" one.

The Apostle Paul, whose letters to fledgling churches are the oldest New Testament writings, made that distinction himself in an epistle to the Corinthians. "Paul himself says literally nothing about the details of the Resurrection," one scholar said.

Accounts of an empty tomb and Jesus' appearances to the disciples after his death (and as a blinding light to Paul) are contained in later New Testament writings.

For centuries, churches have tried to smooth over what seemed to be differences of emphasis, belief and fact in the Bible to arrive at a nonconflicting picture.

But George MacRae, a Jesuit scho-

lar at Harvard divinity school, said

Churches have tried to smooth over the biblical differences.

biblical scholarship today attempts to come to grips with the diversity of early Christianity.

"Luke and Acts seem to put forward the idea that Jesus became son of God," MacRae said, "and the Epistle to the Hebrews believes Jesus was eternally the son of God."

Contemporary biblical analyses, which include a study of the history and literary styles of the period, are used in some major conservative Protestant seminaries such as Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena and Gordon-Conwell Seminary near Boston.

"The professional biblical scholar spends his or her time working with the Bible as an historical collection of documents and is concerned with the human authors of the text in the original setting," said David Scholer, associate professor of New Testament and admissions director at Gordon-Conwell.

This does not mean denying the Bible as the word of God, Scholer said.

Evangelical or conservative scholars often ponder the same questions raised elsewhere in research, such as whether the story of Jesus' glowing transfiguration in Mark is really a Resurrection story placed back into his lifetime.

Robert Stein of evangelical Bethel College dealt with the issue in the Journal of Biblical Literature and

Please Turn to Page 21, Col. 1

Bodily Resurrection Questioned

Continued from 20th Page

concluded that it was not a misplaced Resurrection story but a separate event.

Gordon-Conwell's Scholer said some conservative scholars take such questions very seriously while usually coming up with conservative answers.

In conservative Protestantism, however, many clergy and laymen object to the idea that such "liberal" assumptions or theories should be

considered at all.

Such objections contributed to a schism in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod two years ago and inspired a hard-hitting book by retiring Christianity Today editor Harold Lindsell. Lindsell and the Missouri Synod Lutheran leaders have insisted that evangelicals must regard the Bible as providing an unerring, literal picture of Jesus.

Some segments of Protestantism and Catholicism are comfortable with

a nonliteral reading of the Bible. Myths, they say, may be nonhistorical but may still convey a deep truth.

But how to convey that understanding, held widely at the university and seminary level, to the pews and to nonbelievers who have rejected fundamentalism?

The Rev. John Burke, P.O., executive director of the Word of God Institute, a Catholic organization devoted partly to that task, said he did not know of "any credible biblical scholar

who would hold for a bodily Resurrection."

Yet Burke emphasized that complicated theories about New Testament evidence could not be laid out with pure detachment.

"You're not dealing here with Einstein's theory of relativity. You're dealing with people's happiness. If somebody gets the wrong idea, it has serious consequences for their lives," Burke said.

The Washington, D.C., priest claimed that at least 79% of Roman Catholics never study religion again after they complete childhood preparations for their first Communion or after they finish Catholic schools.

"They are functional illiterates when it comes to the Bible. They have a mind of a child—they want black-and-white answers," he said. "They become very insecure when someone says it's not that simple."

The Rev. Kenneth Watson, pastor of Hollywood First United Methodist Church, admitted that he would describe the working assumptions of contemporary Bible research only with "a select group of people who want to theologize" over a period of time.

"I would never take advantage of people on a Sunday morning when there would be no chance to talk it over," he said.

Another pastor, the Rev. John Townsend of Los Angeles' First Baptist Church, conceded that clergy often avoid such topics.

"But most people in a church are asking for something else—'How can you help me to face life?' or 'How can I help?'" Townsend said. Most clergy want to help people where they are and not tell them "things they don't want to know," he said.

Church members themselves are not necessarily at fault, Townsend said.

Evangelical Protestantism has tended to place more emphasis on spiritual transformation and less on intellectual understanding. And churches that concentrate on community service and social action tend to consider Bible interpretation questions irrelevant and time-consuming.

Theologian Robert McAfee Brown of Union Theological Seminary, New York, recently urged the churches not to concern themselves with questions from the nonbeliever but with those from the poor and downtrodden.

"For them the problem is not so

much 'How can I believe in God in the world of modern science?' but 'How can I believe in God when my

I would never take advantage of people on a Sunday morning.

children are starving or my family is being tortured or the system under which I live doesn't care whether I live or die?" Brown said.

Nevertheless, most biblical scholars think it is important to update public conceptions of the Bible.

"I'm concerned," said M. Jack Suggs, dean of Texas Christian University's Brite divinity school, "whether Christianity can remain a viable option for those who have not been taught to be reflective about the meaning of their religious symbols."

"I think everybody is having trouble articulating faith today; it's easy to fall back to what amounts to jargon," Suggs said.

"If someone says Jesus didn't think he was God incarnate, the average person shivers," he said. "Of course it has consequences."

But the gap will only grow larger if attempts are made to keep it camouflaged, Suggs indicated, because of the information explosion in religious studies along with other fields.

Howard Kee, principal coauthor of "Understanding the New Testament," the most widely used introductory textbook in universities and divinity schools, said modern research is not destructive to Christian faith.

"Far from whittling down the faith, it gives an extra dimension to understanding," asserted Kee, now on the faculty at Boston University's school of theology.

"I think the churches have short-changed themselves to not allow laymen to see the tradition as a living one of adaption rather than one in which it is an all-or-nothing literal account," said Kee.

He said he taught a course at a Bryn Mawr, Pa., Presbyterian church not long ago and found that "people came in droves" because the Bible was put in "a credible context."

German theologian Hans Kung, in his latest book, "On Being Christian," reflects the consensus on whether Jesus experienced a bodily resurrection.

If "body" means his physical form or corpse, Kung says no. If "body" means self or personhood—as does "soma," the Greek word used by Paul—then Kung says yes.

Jesus' Resurrection, Kung asserts, was a "taking up" and "exaltation" to the level of God in heaven—not a place in space but an "invisible mode of being."

A letter from a Presbyterian pastor in Kansas to a religious periodical this summer indicates the growing realization that the conservative views are losing numerical ground.

The Rev. Gordon Jewett of Hutchinson, Kan., blamed the strong influence of the late Rudolf Bultmann in creating a division between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.

"I suppose it's too late to persuade a lot of people that this interpretation of the New Testament is only an option and not a logical nor moral necessity," he wrote.

"There are still those who believe in the possibility and even the probability of the supernatural, which is excluded by Bultmann. Some of us fail to appreciate being classed as obscurantist because we believe in a literal Resurrection of a body that is more real than the bodies we know now," Jewett said.

The so-called liberal interpretations are being taught more widely today partly because of the increased number of Bible scholars now teaching and writing at state universities and at colleges not linked to churches, according to Jonathan Z. Smith of the University of Chicago.

But even seminary professor Ernest W. Saunders, given the assignment to write the entry on Resurrection in the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, presents a non literal theory.

The earliest form of Resurrection accounts among the first Christians "may have been the experience of Peter and his brethren in coming to faith, 'seeing' that Jesus was not a martyred prophet but in very fact Lord and Christ enthroned in glory. The mystery of that conviction is the mystery of faith," Saunders wrote.

APPENDIX B

'Did Jesus Rise Bodily? Most Scholars Say No'

My reaction to John Dart's front-page article (Sept. 5), "Did Jesus Rise Bodily? Most Scholars Say No," on the "theology gap" is mixed.

On one hand, I'm horrified that men who spend their lives studying the Bible, and who set themselves up as leaders, can be so blind to what the Bible clearly teaches. On the other, I think it's good that rank-and-file believers, relative intellectual "peons," know that they cannot place their confidence in men, no matter how many degrees they have.

The whole message of the New Testament is that Jesus was *God in the flesh* (John 1:14) "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The central truth of Christmas is that Jesus was born of a virgin; if this is true, and it is, Jesus obviously had to be God in the flesh. In fact, the beloved apostle, John, looking ahead through the centuries, issued this warning; "By this ye know the Spirit of God; *every spirit that confesses that Jesus has come in the flesh is from God*; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus—is not from God; and this is the spirit of the anti-Christ." (1 John 4: 2 & 3) As these intellectual giants must know, the word Christ is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah. John identifies for all eternity the source of heretical theology.

The problem is that these theologians are worshipping their own intellects, not the supernatural God of the Bible. The apostle Paul, no slouch as a

scholar and theologian, said himself, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of the *world to shame the wise*" (1 Corinthians 1). No man comes to God, or to the resurrected Messiah, through intellectual achievement or scholarship! He demands childlike faith.

As for the denial that Jesus rose bodily from the tomb, let these learned heretics and blasphemers discuss their doubts with Thomas, who actually was invited by Jesus to put His hands in the nail scars, and the wound in Jesus' side, as recorded by John in the 21st chapter. Doubting Thomas, after he explored the wounds in His resurrected body, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." Je-

sus then said, "Because you have seen me have you believed. Blessed are they who do not see, and yet believe."

I pray that these blind guides, while there's still time to avoid the millstones being hung around their necks, will read again Jesus' quote from Isaiah in Matthew 15, "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophecy of you saying:

"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."

PAT BOONE
Los Angeles

APPENDIX C

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD
November 16, 1972

PROPOSAL FOR AN OFFICE OF MASS MEDIA
OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Mass Media Task Force of the Department of Communication and Church Support of the Synod of Southern California recommends:

- 1) That an interfaith office of Mass Media be established to expand and extend the purpose and function of the present Radio and Television Department of the Southern California Council of Churches;
- 2) That all Protestant denominations, the Roman Catholic Church, if possible, and other Christian groups be invited to participate in the financing, program and benefits of the office of Mass Media;
- 3) That the office of Mass Media be affiliated with the Southern California Council of Churches, and, where appropriate, be related to the proper judicatory of the Roman Catholic Church, and other religious bodies;
- 4) That the budget for the office of Mass Media include funds required for multiple staff, equipment, and operation of the office;
- 5) That the hiring of all staff conform with current denominational hiring policies and personnel practices;
- 6) That the Director of the Office of Mass Media be responsible to the Board of Directors of the Mass Media Consortium which is related to the Southern California Council of Churches, and, be related to the proper judicatory of the Roman Catholic Church, and other religious bodies.
- 7) That a Mass Media Board of Directors including laypersons, clergy, and representatives of the media industries served by the office of Mass Media be established; that there be two representatives appointed by each group participating in the financial support of the office of Mass Media; and that the Mass Media Advisory Committee function to assist the Director of the Office of Mass Media as needed (Membership on the Mass Media Advisory Committee could be related to the economic participation of member groups);
- 8) That new means for additional financing of the Office of Mass Media, such as private foundations, individuals, and government agencies, be explored (the Danforth Foundation, Ford Foundation, television networks, and the National Endowment for the Humanities are examples of potential alternate sources of financing);
- 9) That the Office of Mass Media be related to the national and regional offices of the denominations or other religious bodies involved in the support of the Office of Mass Media;
- 10) That, in the interest of stewardship of money and resources, a study be made of:
 - a) available production facilities;
 - b) educational programs of local seminaries, schools of religion, professional media schools, and universities;

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD
November 16, 1972
Proposal

Page 2

Office of Mass Media

- c) religious and cultural film and broadcast program producers;
- d) professional personnel from all aspects of the mass media industries; and
- e) voluntary committees and organizations dedicated to service and the study of the mass media industries.

PROPOSED SERVICES OF THE OFFICE OF MASS MEDIA

The office of Mass Media should provide the following services to the church and the mass media industries in Southern California.

Ministry

Provide a ministry to the mass media industries in Southern California.

Initiate a continuing study of the public media to assist the local broadcasters in their total program service to the community; provide a forum for dialogue among broadcasters, filmmakers, journalists, and the public; honor the media for their outstanding ongoing and special contributions to the community; and assist the mass media industries in the development, maintenance, and enforcement of voluntary program standards.

Encourage and support the public media in the free exercise of the Constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press.

Interpretation

Institute a continuing study of the nature of the message that the church is and ought to be communicating to the public through the use of mass media.

Interpret the concerns of the church to the mass media industries.

Assist member organizations of the office of Mass Media in the effective dissemination of their particular religious messages.

Worship

Coordinate broadcast worship services for those members of the religious community who cannot attend worship services because of illness or infirmity.

Promotion and Publicity

Promote and publicize church radio, television, and film programs. Provide media consultation for local churches and judicatories in the promotion of those local events which are important to the entire religious community.

Develop media marketing campaigns for member organizations.

To place spot announcements and religious messages on local media outlets.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD
November 16, 1972
Proposal

Page 3

Office of Mass Media

News

Cooperate with local and national religious and secular news service organizations in the development and distribution of religious news and information.

Education

Establish communications workshops, seminars, institutes and other training opportunities in conjunction with existing educational and institutions and stations to assist local churchmen in their use of mass media.

Design communications and media research projects to increase knowledge of the unique characteristics and problems of communicating religious messages by film or broadcasting.

Production

Develop, coordinate, and produce programs for local media outlets.

Assist national and regional offices of member religious bodies in the production and local distribution of media programs.

Experiment with the hardware, messages, and physical characteristics of the film and broadcast media to discover new ways of utilizing light and sound for the communication of religious messages.

(June 5, 1972 Working draft)
Revised November 16, 1972

APPENDIX D

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELIGIOUS RADIO-TV-FILM ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Religious Radio-Television-Film Association has the purpose of communicating the message of the church through the use of the mass media. It is an inter-faith membership based organization governed by its own Board of Directors and related to the Southern California Council of Churches. However, its membership is open to all individuals and organized religious communities in Southern California.

Services may include the following:

1. Initiate a continuing study of the public media to assist the local broadcasters in their total program service to the community; provide a forum for dialogue among broadcasters, film-makers, journalists, and the public; honor the media for their outstanding ongoing and special contributions to the community; and assist the mass media industries in the development, maintenance, and enforcement of voluntary program standards. Encourage and support the public media in the free exercise of the Constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press.
2. Institute a continuing study of the nature of the message that the church is and ought to be communicating to the public through the use of mass media.

Interpret the concerns of the church to the mass media industries.

Assist member organizations of the Association in the effective dissemination of their particular religious messages.

3. Coordinate broadcast worship services for those members of the religious community who cannot attend worship services because of illness or infirmity.
4. Promote and publicize church radio, television, and film programs. Provide media consultation for local churches and judicatories in the promotion of those local events which are important to the entire religious community.

Develop media marketing campaigns for member organizations.

Place spot announcements and religious messages on local media outlets.

5. Establish communications workshops, seminars, institutes and other training opportunities in conjunction with existing educational institutions and stations to assist local churchmen in their use of mass media.

Design communications and media research projects to increase knowledge of the unique characteristics and problems of communicating religious messages by film or broadcasting.

6. Develop, coordinate, and produce programs for local media outlets.

Assist national and regional offices of member religious bodies in the production and local distribution of media programs.

Experiment with the hardware, messages, and physical characteristics of the film and broadcast media to discover new ways of utilizing light and sound for the communication of religious messages.

Developed by Dr. James Loper. Approved by Board of Directors, SCCC, March 7, 1973.

APPENDIX E

BY-LAWS
FOR THE REGULATION, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED
BY STATUE OR ITS ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE
RELIGIOUS RADIO-TELEVISION-FILM ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ARTICLE I - MEMBERS

The membership in this Association shall consist of two kinds:

1. Individual members of the religious community of Southern California who express a desire to become members and promote the work of the Association through participation in the work, or by making contributions for the communication ministry in Southern California.
2. Corporate members such as organized churches, denomination of churches or religious communities in Southern California, who participate in the work of the Association by electing or appointing delegates to the Board of Directors as hereinafter provided for, and making contributions to the Association.

ARTICLE II - MEETINGS

1. The Annual Meeting for transaction of such business as may be necessary or advisable shall be held during the month of January of each year. Notice of the time and place for holding such meeting shall be given to members not less than thirty days prior to the holding of such meeting. Notice shall be given by first class mail to the address or record of each member.
2. Special meetings of the members may be held at any time on the call of the president or by order of the Board of Directors, or on the written request of fifteen members. Notice of the time and place and the purpose of such meeting shall be given to the members in the same manner as for the Annual meeting.
3. A quorum for holding any meeting of the members shall be twenty-five members.
4. Any meeting may be adjourned from time to time until its business is completed; and the members present at any meeting of any adjourned meeting, if less than a quorum, may adjourn from time to time until a quorum is present.

ARTICLE III - OFFICERS

1. The officers shall consist of a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer and such other officers as the Board of Directors may establish from time to time.

2. All officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors.

3. The officers shall perform such duties as or ordinarily and customarily incumbent upon their positions, and such other duties as may from time to time be determined by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV - EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board of the Board of Directors shall consist of the elected officers plus the junior past-president.

ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors shall consist of the following persons:

1. One member nominated to the Board of Directors by each participating denomination of churches, communion of churches or organized community of churches associating itself with the Association.

2. One member nominated to the Board of Directors by each local or community Council or Federation of Churches.

3. Five members from the membership of the Association at-large.

4. Three members from the Communication Media.

ARTICLE VI - DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. The Board of Directors shall have the entire and complete responsibility for the Association in all matters, except as to those provided for by statute, articles of Incorporation, and Civil Code, that must be submitted to the members.

2. The Board of Directors shall hold such meetings, either regular or special at such time and place as it shall determine and upon such notice as it may provide.

3. The Board of Directors may authorize such committees as it may deem necessary to carry on the functions and to achieve the purposes of the Association as it may desire, and may provide for the appointment, functions and duties of such committee.

4. The Board of Directors shall have final authority over the employment and dismissal of any staff person or persons.

ARTICLE VII - RULES OF ORDER

Roberts Rules of Order, Revised shall govern all matters not covered by these By-Laws, the Articles of Incorporation or statutes.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of those members present at any regular meeting of the members or at any special meeting of the members called for that purpose.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENT:

That I, the undersigned, being duly elected, and acting secretary of the Religious Radio-Television-Film Association of Southern California, hereby certify that the foregoing By-Laws were adopted as the By-Laws of said corporation on the 16th day of October 1972.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto subscribed my name this 16th day of October 1972.

[Signed *Everett Curry Jr.*]

Everett Curry, Jr.
Secretary

APPENDIX F

BY-LAWS FOR THE REGULATION, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED BY STATUTE OR ITS ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE

RELIGIOUS RADIO*TELEVISION*FILM ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ARTICLE I - MEMBERS

The membership in this Association shall consist of two kinds:

1. Individual members of the religious community of Southern California who express a desire to become members and promote the work of the Association through participation in the work, or by making contributions for the communication ministry in Southern California.
2. Corporate members such as organized churches, denomination of churches or religious communities in Southern California, who participate in the work of the Association by electing or appointing delegates to the Board of Directors as hereinafter provided for, and making contributions to the Association, and received and seated by the membership.

ARTICLE II - MEETINGS

1. The Annual Meeting for transaction of such business as may be necessary or advisable shall be held during the month of January of each year. Notice of the time and place for holding such meeting shall be given to members not less than thirty days prior to holding of such meeting. Notice shall be given by first class mail to the address of record of each member.
2. Special meetings of the members may be held at any time on the call of the president or by order of the Board of Directors, or on the written request of fifteen members. Notice of the time and place and the purpose of such meeting shall be given to the members in the same manner as for the Annual meeting.
3. A quorum for holding any meeting of members shall be twenty-five members.
4. Any meeting may be adjourned from time to time until its business is completed; and the members present at any meeting or any adjourned meeting, if less than a quorum, may adjourn from time to time until a quorum is present.

ARTICLE III - OFFICERS

1. The officers shall consist of a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer and such other officers as the Board of Directors may establish from time to time.
2. All officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors.
3. The officers shall perform such duties as are ordinarily and customarily incumbent upon their positions, and such other duties as may from time to time be determined by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall consist of the president, the vice president, the secretary, and the treasurer plus three members at large, not less than one of whom shall be a board member representative from the Southern California Council of Churches.

(1)

ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors shall consist of not more than thirty nor less than eight persons selected as follows:

1. One member nominated to the Board of Directors by each participating denomination of churches, communion of churches, association of churches or organized community of churches associating itself with the Association.
2. Two members shall be elected to the Board of Directors by the Southern California Council of Churches.
3. Five members from the membership of the Association at large.
4. Three members from the Communication Media who shall be nominated by the Board of Directors and elected by the membership.

ARTICLE VI - DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. The Board of Directors shall have the entire and complete responsibility for the Association in all matters, except as to those provided for by statute, Articles of Incorporation, and Civil Code, that must be submitted to the members.
2. The Board of Directors shall hold such meetings, either regular or special at such time and place as it shall determine and upon such notice as it may provide.
3. The Board of Directors may authorize such committees as it may deem necessary to carry on the functions and to achieve the purposes of the Association as it may desire, and may provide for the appointment, functions and duties of such committees.
4. The Board of Directors shall have the final authority over the employment and dismissal of any staff person or persons.
5. The Board of Directors shall make periodic reports on its operations and fiscal affairs to the Southern California Council of Churches and to such other supporting bodies as may request such reporting.

ARTICLE VII - RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern all matters not covered by these By-Laws, the Articles of Incorporation or statutes.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of those members of the Board of Directors present at any regular meeting of the Board or at any special meeting of the Board called for that purpose and such amendments must be ratified by a majority of the quorum required for a meeting of the membership.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENT:

That I, the undersigned, being duly elected, and acting secretary of the Religious Radio-Television-Film Association of Southern California, hereby certify that the foregoing Amended By-Laws were adopted as the Amended By-Laws of said Corporation on the

day of _____, 1973.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto subscribed my name this _____
1973.

Day of _____

Everett Curry, Jr.
Secretary

6 Los Angeles Times
Part IV—Sun., Dec. 15, 1974

Group Aims to Put Religion in Mass Media

BY DAN L. THRAPP
Times Religion Editor

Mrs. Mary Dorr, airplane pilot, mother of five and one of the busiest people around, has taken on a new job that might strike some as locking the hangar door after the plane is stolen.

But she doesn't think so. She has been appointed executive director of the Religious Radio-TV-Film Assn. of Southern California, which represents, in a way, about 70 Southland church denominations.

Its mission is about like that of the first apostle: to try to carry a light into a wayward wilderness. Mrs. Dorr, certainly the loveliest director — and the first woman—to head the association, thinks the torch can burn brightly.

Does she fear the mission to make religion an influence in films is futile? "Not at all," she said firmly.

"Certainly religion can be a definite influence. Surely it can help create a better world through the media, by working outside and within it as well. We intend to do both."

Mrs. Dorr is no stranger to the media. With credentials as a producer-director-commentator and actress she has most recently been national public relations director of volunteer activities for the American Bible Society.

But she is also known as a lecturer, book reviewer and radio-TV personality and is a former national president of the American Women in Radio and Television. In that capacity she has visited and spoken in a dozen countries.

She expects her new position to be just as interesting and perhaps even more influential.

"With 12 million people

in Southern California and most of them affiliated some way with a church or other house of worship, we have more clout than one might expect," she said. "People listen to us. Or will."

The association she will direct is headed by a five-member executive committee, with the Rev. Benjamin H. Moore as president. He is minister of the Hollywood-Beverly Christian Church.

Others on the committee are Dr. Karl E. Kniseley, First Lutheran of Glendale, vice president; the Rev. Canon John V. Farmsworth, Episcopal diocese of Los Angeles, secretary; Mrs. Mildred Traeger, Salvation Army, treasurer; and Edwin W. Buckalew, president of SIGNAL Productions, Hollywood.

Mrs. Louise Reynolds of Montrose, formerly associated with the Young Women's Christian Assn., the American Heart Assn. and other organizations, will assist Mrs. Dorr.

One of the functions of the association, which had been headed by Dr. Clifton E. Moore, a United Presbyterian clergyman until his recent retirement, is fielding questions from the media.

"Should a film organization be working on a picture involving a Lutheran pastor, for example, they might ask us about some matter, in which case I would refer the query to Dr. Kniseley who could handle it with expertise," she said.

Another function is to attend previews and give assessments on the religious merits, or the reverse, of a film.

"We can go farther than in the past to give our reaction to a problem in terms of whether it should be seen," commented Mr. Moore.

"We are reevaluating films—what we can do to influence them. In the future we expect to try to influence the industry from within it rather than from without."

To that end a new advisory committee is being formed, said Mr. Moore. "A sort of panel," he added.

Please Turn to Page 7, Col. 1



Mrs. Mary Dorr

MEDIA

Continued from 6th Page

"This will involve talking to the people who count, the producers, writers and so on, trying to make the man himself see responsibly what he is doing.

"This is pretty hard," he admitted. "But it is the only way.

"Certainly we are not going to change the entire industry in this way, but we hope to have an impact for improvement."

He said this approach would have pragmatic, rather than illusory, benefits.

"Hopefully we can supply as much religious influence in this way as it is possible to exert on the media," he said.

He rejected as an alternative trying to persuade film-makers to avoid what the church considers harmful simply because it sees it that way.

"If you go that way, you are getting in trouble," he said. "You are fighting dollar signs, and the industry is not going to stand for it."

Therefore, Mrs. Dorr put in, "our approach will be very indirect, the people-helping-people kind of things the church believe in." Will the audience get a message so subtle? "Oh, yes," she believed. With this kind of program the spiritual message can really be brought out."

Mr. Moore said that "we are talking about getting to those people who wouldn't stay" for a more obvious approach.

On the advisory board will be such people as Henry Rieger, vice president of NBC television; Kenneth Wales, with a Disciples of Christ background, and Nicholas Royce, Orthodox, all active professionally in some phase of the entertainment industry.

"The board's purpose is to advise us, not the industry," explained Mrs. Dorr. "It will guide us as we seek to most effectively work within the industry. We have never had this kind of organization before."

She added that the advisory board would have up to a dozen members, all professionals in the field and most of them in the upper executive echelon.

She expects to be fully as active in the radio and television fields as she will be with regard to motion pictures.

"There are 186 radio stations and 34 television stations within the region," she explained. The area served extends from the Mexican border north through Santa Barbara County.

"We expect to tape spots of 15, 30 or 60 seconds. We hope they will be widely used—and listened to."

Many of the association's familiar programs will be continued, Mrs. Dorr added. These include "Challenge My Sermon," "Today's Religion," "Belief," "Unit Three," "Religion on the Line" and "Great Sermons."

Most of them were developed by Dr. Clifton Moore.

Mrs. Dorr expected a new emphasis to be developed on religion news, with programs or spots related to this field to be made available to radio and perhaps television stations. The field, she believed, had been largely neglected by the electronic media in the past but, if expertly handled, had wide audience possibilities.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Carl Barker
Real Estate Developer

Mr. Zan Beckstead
Exec. V.P., CREA

Mr. Daken K. Broadhead
President, Allied Records

Dr. Kenneth Carlson
Glendale Federal Savings
and Loan Association

The Rev. Paul Edwards
American Baptists

Mr. James Ellsworth
Consultant, Western
Bancorporation

Mr. Paul Evans
Haven of Rest

The Rev. David L. Gray
Hollywood Congregational Church

The Rev. Samir J. Habiby
Episcopal Parish

The Rev. Ray Harper
First Christian Church

Col. Richard Headrick
Consultant

The Rev. William Ilten
Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Dr. Walter Mees
Trinity Lutheran Church

The Rev. Benjamin Moore
Hollywood-Beverly Christian Church

The Rev. Robert Parry, Chaplain
Hoag Memorial Presbyterian Hospital

Dr. Randall C. Phillips
Wilshire United Methodist Church

The Rev. William Steel
United Methodist Center

The Rev. Ralph G. Tuchman
Burbank-Toluca Lake Church of
Religious Science

The Rev. Robert Worster
Saint Mary's Episcopal Church

RIM AWARD COMMITTEE

Chairman
Gerald Christian Nordskog

Judging Chairman
Richard Headrick



Richard Headrick

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President's Message

Welcome to the first RIM Awards Program.

The Religion-in-Media Association invites you to join the common concern that the high moral values of America's Judeo-Christian tradition be reflected by the Media of the nation (Press, Radio, Motion Pictures and Television).

The RIM Awards are made in appreciation of the reflection of those values.

The Rev. Karl E. Kniseley, D.D.
President,
Religion-in-Media Association



PRESIDENT
Dr. Karl E. Kniseley
Senior Pastor First Lutheran Church

Vice President—Television
Carla Kallan
Producer
KNBC



Vice President—Radio
Dr. Eugene Bertermann
Far East Broadcasting Company, Inc.



Executive Vice President
Mr. Gerald Christian Nordskog
Senior Vice President
Nordskog Industries



Vice President—Motion Pictures
Mr. Nicholas Royce



Secretary
Mr. Lawrence Young
President
Cloister Press



Vice President—Press
Mr. Ferdinand Mendenhall
Vice President, Editor
Valley News



Treasurer
Mr. William T. Huston
President
Watson Land Development

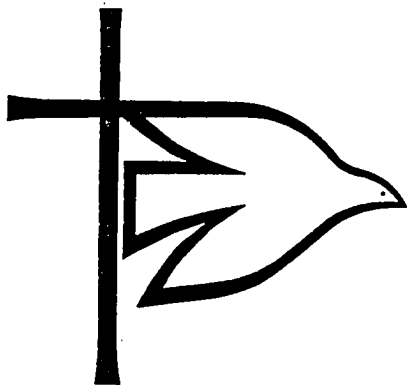


Legal Counsel
Mr. James Kendrick
Attorney-at Law

Special Consultants
CPA
Mr. Ellsworth Knutson
Alexander Grant Company

Administrative Assistant: Susan Winniford

Executive Director
Mrs. Mary Dorr



Southern California COUNCIL of CHURCHES

XX160XX Wilton Place, Los Angeles, California 90028 XXXXXX (213) 665-6177
5250 Santa Monica Blvd., Rm 205 Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 665-5771, Ext. 42

TO: Priscilla Chaplin, Karl Kniseley, Gerald McHarg, Ruth Nicastro,
Max Perrow, Wm. Steel, Robert Worster, W.H. Mees, Paul Edwards

FROM: J. Irwin Trotter

Here is my understanding of the consensus we will be taking to Religion in Media on Wednesday. If you have disagreements with the substance and/or wording, call me Monday or Tuesday.

1. Most of the official denominational judicatories feel they must have an ecumenical media arm. For whatever reasons (blame can be assigned on both sides), Religion in Media no longer belongs to the denominations. The undersigned, at least, are ready to take control of it again - or we are willing to form a new consortium that would be accountable to the denominations (and possibly with more accountability to the Southern California Council of Churches).

2. We believe the basic funding for such an organization must come from the denominations involved. If those denominations do not have great resources, then the program itself must be modest. This we believe is concomitant with denominational control.

3. We are ready to work in partnership with the National Council of Churches in the Hunger Media Project incorporating their proposed staff with our resources. This will necessitate a complete reassessment of staffing and job descriptions.

APPENDIX J

RELIGION IN MEDIA
Cash Budget
April 20, 1978

Balance of cash, Security Pac. Nat'l Bk., 3/31/78	\$ 7,448.59
Less cash reserved for special purposes	<u>[5,150.00]</u>
Balance of cash available for regular operations	<u>\$ 2,298.59</u>

April - Receipts to 4/14/78:	
Baptist Churches	\$ 82.93
American Lutheran Church (So. W)	250.00
Trinity Lutheran Church	10.00
	<hr/>
Total actual receipts to date	\$ 342.93

April - Disbursements - estimated:	
Advance to RIM - Awards Program - 1978	\$ 375.00
Salaries (net)	1,664.00
Payroll expenses (Federal \$590.63 + State quarterly)	1,090.63
Telephone (Actual bill)	163.00
Gen'l Office (Ev Chow 25.00)	60.00
Postage	40.00
Production	110.00
Loan payment - T. W. Steel	100.00
Various other expenses (auto, etc.)	<u>150.00</u>
	<u>[3,752.63]</u>
Total estimated disbursements	<u>[3,409.70]</u>
Estimated additional cash requirement for April	<u>\$ [1,111.11]</u>

Note:

Accruing expense for "Funds Development"	
Jan - March incl.	\$1,950.00
Due A. Grant & Co.	\$ 600.00

Bank of America - Awards Account	\$ 177.41
Stop payment - order April 1978	<u>[2.00]</u>
Balance	<u>\$ 175.41</u>

RELIGION IN MEDIA
Receipts and Disbursements
For Quarter Ended March 31, 1978

Contributions		\$13,032.66	
Gain on Sales of "Angels"		650.00	
Subtotal		<u>\$13,682.66</u>	
Funds reserved for special use:		\$	
Stern Foundation		<u>5,000.00</u>	
Total receipts			<u>\$18,682.66</u>
Disbursements			
Salary - Director	\$3,750.00		
Pension payments	<u>500.00</u>	\$ 4,250.00	
Salary - Office		2,340.00	
Payroll tax expense		457.37	
Auto expense		382.22	
Dues and Subscriptions		162.43	
Telephone		624.83	
General Office expense		305.72	
Postage		367.19	
Production expenses (programming)		297.17	
Promotional (NRB Convention - net \$913.20)		1,413.20	
Recording Tapes		42.29	
Miscellaneous (bank charge - checkbook)		9.67	
Accounting fees - Alexander Grant & Co.		325.00	
"Awards" expenses (paid Jan., 1978)		<u>2,347.16</u>	
Total disbursements			<u>\$13,324.25</u>
Receipts in excess of disbursements			<u>5,358.40</u>
Funds reserved for special use (see accounts payable)			<u>\$(5,000.00)</u>
Net current receipts applicatory to ordinary operations			<u>\$ 358.40</u>

RELIGION IN MEDIA
Balance Sheet
March 31, 1978

Assets

Bank - Security Pacific National	\$ 7,448.59	
Bank of America - "Awards" account	<u>177.41</u>	
Total assets		<u>\$ 7,626.00</u>

Liabilities

Federal payroll taxes payable	\$ 455.72	
California payroll taxes payable	322.70	
Accounts payable - "Angel" costs	150.00	
Accounts payable - various	5,100.00	
Notes Payable	<u>5,750.00</u>	
Total liabilities		\$11,778.42

Capital

Fund Balance - RIM	\$(4,688.24)	
Net receipts applicatory to ordinary operations	358.40	
Fund Balance - RIM "Awards"	<u>177.41</u>	
Total Capital		<u>\$(4,152.42)</u>
Total liabilities and capital		<u>\$ 7,626.00</u>

APPENDIX K

1977 RELIGION IN MEDIA AWARD BANQUET

ITEM	ACTUAL (992 People)	BUDGETED (8-15-77 MEETING) (1,000 people)	PER 9-28-77 MEETING (800 people)
Projected Income: (total)	\$30,212.00	\$27,000.00	\$25,500.00

Budgeted Expenses:

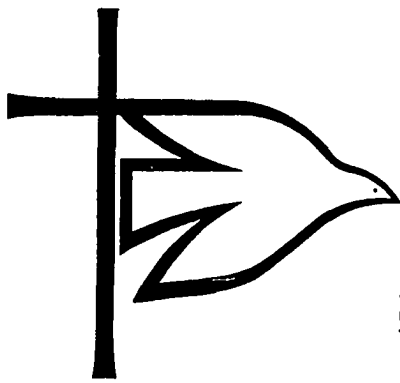
Judging Expenses	\$ 307.08	\$ 450.00	\$ 600.00
Century Plaza dinner lighting decorations	\$15,521.07	\$16,000.00	\$12,000.00
Entertainers	\$ 2,166.40	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Pension Fund	\$ 776.75	not budgeted	not budgeted
Orchestra	\$ 2,583.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 500.00
Awards	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,500.00
Consultants			
Jan Wattel			
Dana Van Schaack	\$ 1,038.00	not budgeted	not budgeted
Postage	\$ 407.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
Celebrities Expense	\$ 130.08	\$ 200.00	\$ 500.00
Phone Bill (Paid by RIM)	\$ 250.00 (est.)	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Video Tape & Equipment	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 2,000.00
Misc. Expenses	\$ 374.39	\$ 200.00	\$ 350.00
Office Supplies	\$ 159.00	not budgeted	not budgeted
Dana's Salary	donated		
Souvenir Program	donated (\$1,000 est. value)		
Total Expenses:	\$27,955.10	\$24,600.00	\$21,500.00
Net Profit (or Loss):	\$ 2,257.00	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 4,000.00
	**(\$ 1,800.00) (est.)		
	\$ 457.00 NET		

* Actual Receipts:

Dinner Tickets & Donations	\$26,212.00
Nominee Fees	\$ 3,275.00
Souvenir Program	\$ 1,750.00
TOTAL	\$30,212.00

**Outstanding Expenses

Editing Video Tape	\$ 1,200.00 (est.)
Master Tape	\$ 600.00 (est.)



Southern California COUNCIL of CHURCHES

~~1716 North Wilton Place, Los Angeles, California 90028~~ (213) 465-5171
5250 Santa Monica Blvd., Rm 205 Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 665-5771, Ext. 42

March 28, 1978

Dear Friend:

This letter is being sent to persons representing denominations (within the Southern California Council of Churches) which are participants in the discussions regarding media and communications strategy of the Council.

The enclosed statement and recommendations are submitted by the committee which you authorized to prepare such a basis for upcoming consultations with the Religion and Media Association (RIM).

As indicated in our previous meetings, it is our intention to pursue the strategy suggested herein, as a joint project with the National Council of Churches. Of course we hope that the Board of Directors of RIM will accept these proposals.

Should the Board of Directors of RIM reject these proposals and refuse to comply with their own by-laws regarding membership and decision-making processes, it would be the recommendation of this committee that the Council of Churches and its participating denominations withdraw endorsement and support from RIM and establish a new communications consortium to implement the program described here.

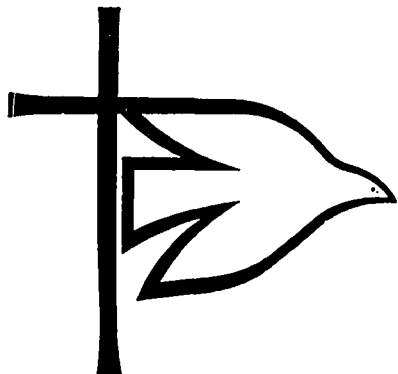
This consortium should be open to the possibility of working with non-council denominations and other faith groups wherever appropriate.

If you have suggestions or comments, please contact me at 665-5771 prior to the April 3 meeting with RIM which will be held at the Episcopal Church headquarters, 1220 W. Fourth St., Los Angeles at 10:00 a.m.

Sincerely,

Rev. Wm. E. Steel, Convenor,
Proposal Committee

WES:mc



Southern California COUNCIL of CHURCHES

~~1716 North Wilton Place, Los Angeles, California 90028 (213) 465-5171~~
5250 Santa Monica Blvd., Rm 205 Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 665-5771, Ext. 42

To: The Board of Directors, Religion in Media

Statement of Concern by member denominations of the Southern California Council of Churches regarding the Religion in Media Association:

1. RIM is the legal successor to the Radio-Television and Film Commission of the Southern California Council of Churches. As a communications organization, created by the Council, a major RIM responsibility is to represent the interests of the denominational bodies involved.
2. RIM was created as the official media vehicle for participating religious bodies (denominations and area councils). Denominational endorsement and support was secured on the basis of representations made in the Constitution and by-laws of the organization which assured the organized religious community control of the corporation through majority representation on the Board of Directors.
3. RIM is now in violation of its own Constitution and By-laws. The denominational and conciliar representatives no longer constitute a majority of members of the Board of Directors.
4. On behalf of its constituent denominations, the Council of Churches called attention to this matter at the regular meeting of the RIM Board of Directors in January, 1978. The Board of Directors agreed to postpone election of members and officers until the matter was resolved through negotiation. However, in a called meeting in February, RIM proceeded to elect new officers prior to the promised consultation with denominational representatives.

Nevertheless, we submit the attached proposal.

PROPOSAL

The Council of Churches of Southern California and its participating denominations call for the adoption of a new communications strategy in Los Angeles. The strategy should be based on the following Assumptions and Guidelines.

Assumptions:

Religious broadcasting in Los Angeles is currently ineffective in its efforts to represent the concerns of major denominations to the broad community.

We have put all our energy and resources into the development of programming for the free "public service" time made available to the religious community by broadcasters. These programs, low in cost and scheduled at inconvenient and unpopular hours, serve the broadcasters more than they serve the church. They help broadcasters meet "community service" requirements of the Federal Communications Commission, but they do not reach the broad community with the concerns of our denominations.

The meager resources of the church which are committed to media should be utilized so as to most effectively reach the broadest possible segment of the viewing and listening audience.

Guidelines:

We would expect the Board of Directors of RIM to reorganize itself so that its membership will again conform to its original by-laws.

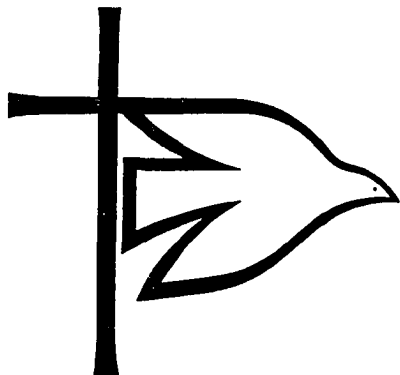
We propose that efforts to supply broadcasters with low-cost, low-visibility programming be de-emphasized. We propose that the following alternatives be observed as priorities for our involvement with mass media:

(1) RIM will become a resource for writers and producers, providing new perspective and insight from the religious community on our major concerns and values such as hunger and justice, and the human search for liberation and meaningful commitment. As media professionals develop trust and respect for the religious community, we believe that our concerns will be given greater visibility in secular programming.

(2) RIM will develop and concentrate on a capability of placing meaningful and worthwhile actions of the religious community in secular news broadcasts and other programming.

(3) RIM will become an advocate of religious concerns in the broadcast industry itself, such as program content and quality, as well as management practices in the industry and issues related to the effect of media on the community.

(4) RIM will consult with denominational communications offices to identify resource persons within the denominations. These persons can serve as a reservoir of talent and expertise, available to the industry as spokespersons for the religious community.



APPENDIX N

Southern California

COUNCIL of CHURCHES

5250 Santa Monica Blvd., Rm 205

Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213)665-5771, Ext. 42

April 25, 1978

To: Members of Task Force on Media

Dear Friends:

Enclosed you will find a copy of a proposal which serves as the minutes of our meeting on April 24, 1978.

Suffice it to say that RIM did not respond to our proposal, and those present felt it necessary to continue developing a separate proposal, in order not to lose the NOC help. As you can see, without their help we would have to proceed on a part time basis.

If you see improvements to be made in the proposals or have objections to any part of it, please let me know immediately because this will be before the Southern California Council of Churches on May 3.

If you have not designated an official representative from your denomination's Communications Committee, please do so.

Finally, the hour has arrived for definite financial commitments to this enterprise. Please make sure your budgeting process for 1979 considers this proposal.

Thanks for all your help. I think we are at the beginning of a significant ecumenical ministry.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. J. Irwin Trotter, President,
Southern California Council of Churches

JIT:mc

Encl: (1) Proposal

APPENDIX N

PROPOSAL

Ecumedia Committee
Southern California Council of Churches

Guidelines

1. Ecumedia will be a resource for media writers and producers, providing perspective and insight from the religious community on our major concerns and values such as hunger and justice, and the human search for liberation and meaningful commitment.
2. Ecumedia will develop and concentrate on a capability of placing meaningful and worthwhile actions of the religious community in secular news broadcasts and other programming.
3. Ecumedia will become an advocate of religious and ethical concerns in the broadcast industry itself--in program content and quality, management practices, and the effect of the media on the community.
4. Ecumedia will help identify persons within the denominations who can be articulate spokespersons for the religious community.
5. Ecumedia will supply broadcasters with low cost programming consistent with our guidelines and our ability to produce, rather than on the basis of filling every available slot.

Membership

Ecumedia will be a committee of the Southern California Council of Churches. The membership will consist of one official representative from each member denomination, responsible to their respective Communications Committees. Ecumedia will choose its own officers, but the Treasurer will be the Treasurer of the Southern California Council of Churches. Other denominations or religious groups can join the committee on approval of the Council of Churches, providing their total number does not exceed that of member denominations.

Advisory Committees can be formed to maintain linkage with various persons whose advice and assistance can be helpful:

A Media Advisory Committee, consisting of persons from the industry who are members of our denominations or interested friends; a Councils of Churches Advisory Committee, to provide linkage with local councils; an Advocacy Advisory Committee, relating Ecumedia to groups working for justice in management practices, associations working for better programming, etc; Finance Advisory Committee, of foundations and others with resources earmarked for religion and media; and others. The Advisory Committees may be represented at Committee meetings, but without vote.

4/24/78

PROPOSAL
 Ecumedia Committee
 Southern California Council of Churches

Page 2

Budget(tentative)

<u>Salaries</u>		
Director	\$ 20,000.00	
Fringe Benefits	4,000.00	
Secretary	8,500.00	
Fringe Benefits	2,000.00	\$ 34,500.00
 <u>Office Expense</u>		
Rent	2,500.00	
Supplies	2,000.00	
Duplicating and mailing	2,000.00	
Telephone(incl. line feeds)	2,000.00	
Travel	3,000.00	
Distribution of news and features	1,500.00	
Photos	750.00	\$ 13,750.00
 <u>One Time Charge</u>		
Equipment-office and recording	1,750.00	\$ 1,750.00
Total		\$ 50,000.00

Sources of Funding(To begin January 1, 1979)

National Council of Churches	\$ 25,000.00	
(in exchange for half of the Director and Secretary's time as staff for Hunger Media Consultations. This would initially be a two year commitment)		
Member denominations preliminary commitment	\$ 15,000.00	
Needed in additional pledges or other sources	\$ 10,000.00	
Total		\$ 50,000.00

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT A

INTRODUCING RELIGION IN MEDIA

RELIGION IN MEDIA ASSOCIATION
Mary Dorr, Executive Director
Post Office Box 2164
Los Angeles, California 90051

INTRODUCING RELIGION IN MEDIA

"The purpose of this Corporation is to coordinate Religious Programming in cooperation with Religious Communities in Southern California for broadcast and public showing through the media in Southern California." (Article 2, Articles of Incorporation)

Religion in Media is the only non profit organization acting as liaison and representative between the various religious communities of Southern California and the media industry. Religion in Media is totally committed to producing, promoting, coordinating and distributing television and radio programs of moral or spiritual value for presentation over donated public service time.

RIM serves as a point of contact for the media with interests of the Southern California Religious Community.

RIM acts as interpreter and advocate of concerns of the religious community to media in Southern California.

While there is great diversity among the religious communities in Southern California RIMs constituents recognize the urgent need for communicating religious values in today's world. RIM is an association of these diverse religious communities which have integrated their efforts to promote and provide pro-social and transcendent values in the culture.

To achieve this goal RIM promotes, produces, coordinates and distributes programming which expresses the concern of the constituent religious communities.

RIM provides a service to the broadcast media by offering a central office and liaison with representatives of the major faiths, some fifty denominations and over 5,000 congregations in the area.

In recognition of the value of this liaison, broadcasters in Southern California are currently providing public service program time through RIM. Religion in Media produces 500 original programs a year, distributes 463 programs during the average month, and coordinates an excess of 3,000 hours of television and radio programming in 12 months. Public service time donated for RIM productions or for programs distributed by RIM in the past two years had an annual market value of \$53 million.

Mass media is the major key to shaping future life styles in today's world. The average American watches television 26 hours a week, compared to 16 minutes of reading a book. In 1974, advertisers spent \$3.5 billion out of the conviction that mass media could change the behavior and the buying habits of the American public. The viewing audience is influenced by what takes place in mass media.

Religion in Media is the only interfaith association in Southern California providing the religious community with an effective channel to the broadcast industry.

The religious communities of Southern California provide funding, as well as representation on the RIM Board of Directors. This board is responsible for the direction and guidance of the association. In addition, individuals, corporations and foundations provide consultation and financial assistance to Religion in Media.

In short, RIM represents the best efforts of the religious communities of Southern California to impact the broader community with positive social values. You may become a part of this challenging venture by sending your contribution (tax deductible) to RIM, P. O. Box 2164, Los Angeles, California 90051.

The following television and radio programs have been produced, distributed or promoted by RIM in 1975-76.

Television Programs:

Belief*
 Today's Religion*
 You and Your World Units 3, 4, 5*
 Challenge My Sermon*
 Jewish Response*
 Today's Involved Church*
 Uncle Bill's Park Party*
 Dimension*
 Sunrise Way*
 This is the Life
 Odyssey
 Davey and Goliath
 High Adventure
 Franciscan Films

Radio Programs:

Interfaith Dialogue*
 Pipeline to God*
 Faith for every Frontier*
 World Religious News
 National Radio Pulpit
 Hiley Rose Program
 Religion on the Line
 Great Sermons
 Capitol and the Clergy
 Women of Faith
 What's It All About
 Open Door
 Generation Rap

Religion in Media is involved in the coordination, placement of personnel, and promotion of the above programs. In addition RIM has produced public service announcements on hunger, literacy, Easter Sunrise Services and other Holy Days. RIM produces results for the religious community. RIM warrants your support.

(*) Indicates programs produced by RIM.

EXHIBIT B

RELIGION IN MEDIA ASSOCIATION

MARY DORR
Executive Director

P.O. BOX 2164
LOS ANGELES, CA 90051
TEL (213) 481-0340

TELEVISION PROGRAMS				WEEKLY	MONTHLY
CH. 2	KNXT	TODAY'S RELIGION	SUN. 6:30 a.m. Fri-faith	2	8
CH. 4	KNBC	ODYSSEY(all religions)	SUN. 10:30 a.m.	1	4
CH. 4	KNBC	THIS IS THE LIFE	SUN. 10:00 a.m.	1	4
CH. 7	KABC-TV	DIMENSIONS	SUN. 9:30 a.m.	1	4
CH. 11	KTTV	UNIT V	SAT. 6:30 a.m.	1	4
CH. 11	KTTV	DAILY MORNING PRAYERS		7	30
CBS-TV NETWORK STATIONS, COAST-to-COAST					
		"GIVE US THIS DAY" DAILY DEVOTIONALS		70	280
CH. 4	KNBC	DAILY DEVOTIONALS..CLOSING STATION		7	30
106	CABLE SYSTEMS ACROSS USA.	"HIGH ADVENTURE"		106	424
CH. 9	KHJ-TV	DAVEY & GOLIATH	MON.--FRI. 8:00 a.m.	5	20
CH. 23	KERO-TV(BAKERSFIELD)	DAVEY & GOLIATH	SAT. 3:30 p.m.	1	4
CH. 42	KPLM-TV(PALM SPRINGS)	DAVEY & GOLIATH		1	4
CH. 30	KHOF-TV	DAVEY & GOLIATH	SAT. 3:30 p.m.	1	4
CH. 30	KHOF-TV	DAVEY & GOLIATH	TUES. 6 P.M.	1	4
CH. 3	KEYT-TV(SANTA BARBARA)	DAVEY & GOLIATH	SAT. 1:30 p.m.	1	4
CH. 3	KTVK-TV(PHOENIX)	DAVEY & GOLIATH	SUN. 4:00 p.m.	1	4
CH. 5	KEME-TV(VENTURA)	DAVEY & GOLIATH		1	4
CH. 2	KNXT-TV-BELIEF (13 weeks)		SUN. 8:00 a.m.	1	4
TOTAL TV SHOWS				209	840
RADIO PROGRAMS				WEEKLY	MONTHLY
KABC	RELIGION ON THE LINE	SUN. 10:00 p.m.-12:00		1	4
KFAC	RELIGIOUS NEWS	SUN. 7:40 a.m.		1	4
KIEV	RELIGIOUS NEWS	SUN. 7:15 a.m.		1	4
KLAC	SPECIALS				1
KHJ	INTERFAITH DIALOGUE	SUN. 5:30 a.m.		1	4
KBIG	INTERFAITH DIALOGUE	SUN. 6:00 a.m.		1	4
KFI	HILLY ROSE PROGRAM	THURS. 11:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m.			1
KCHJ	PIPELINE TO GOD			1	4
KCHJ	GOTTA MINUTE?	MON.-FRI.		7	30
KVIP	GOTTA MINUTE?	MON.-FRI.		7	30
KHRM	GOTTA MINUTE?	MON.-FRI.		7	30
TOTAL RADIO SHOWS				27	116
TOTAL RADIO & TV				236	956
TELESPOTS				1,008	4,032
AIRED ON ELECTRONIC BILL-BOARDS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND IN 10 MAJOR CITIES ACROSS U.S.A.					

NOTE: THIS IS ONLY A PARTIAL LIST OF OUR PROGRAMS! WE ALSO AIR THOUSANDS OF PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS ANNUALLY.

NOTE: ALL OF OUR PROGRAMS ARE AIRED ON FREE, PUBLIC SERVICE TIME AND ARE SUBJECT TO PRE-EMPTION OR POSTPONEMENT BY THE STATIONS.

(NON-PROFIT CORPORATION RELATING TO CHURCH, DENOMINATIONS AND AGENCIES)

RELIGION IN MEDIA ASSOCIATION

MARY DORR
Executive Director

P. O. BOX 2164
LOS ANGELES, CA 90051
TEL (213) 481-0340

TELEVISION PROGRAMS:

			<u>WEEKLY</u>	<u>MONTHLY</u>
CHANNEL 2 KNXT	BELEIF	SUN. 9:30 a.m.	1	4
CHANNEL 2 KNXT	TODAY'S RELIGION	SUN. 10:30 a.m.	1	4
CHANNEL 4 KNBC	ODYSSEY	SUN. 9:00 a.m.	2	8
CHANNEL 4 KNBC	THIS IS THE LIFE	SUN. 8:30 a.m.	1	4
CHANNEL 7 KABC-TV	YOU & YOUR WORLD	SUN. 9:30 a.m.	1	2
CHANNEL 9 KHJ-TV	DAVEY & GOLIATH	MON.thur FRI.& SUN.8:00 a.m.	6	24
CHANNEL 9 KHJ-TV	SPECIALS			1
CHANNEL 40 KHOF-TV	DAVEY & GOLIATH	TUES.6:00 p.m.& SAT.3:30p.m.	2	8
CHANNEL 11 KTTV	UNIT IV	SUN. 7:00 a.m.	1	4
CHANNEL 11 KTTV	CHILDRENS PROGRAMS	SUN.7:30 a.m.	1	4
5 CBS NETWORK STATIONS	OPEN & CLOSE		70	350
CHANNEL 11 METRO MEDIA	DAILY MORNING PRAYERS		7	30
			<u>93</u>	<u>443</u>

RADIO PROGRAMS:

			<u>WEEKLY</u>	<u>MONTHLY</u>
KFAC	RELIGIOUS NEWS	SUN. 7:40 a.m.	1	4
KFI	NATIONAL RADIO PULPIT	SUN. 5:00 a.m.	1	4
KFI	INTERFAITH DIALOGUE	SUN. 12:00 to 12:30 a.m.	1	4
KFI	HILLY ROSE PROGRAM	TWICE MONTHLY 8:00 to 10:00 p.m.		2
KABC	RELIGION ON THE LINE	SUN. 10:00 to 12:00 p.m.	1	4
KHJ	ITERFAITH DIALOGUE	SUN. 5:30 to 6:00 a.m.	1	4
KBIG	GREAT SERMONS FM ONLY	SUN. 6:00 a.m.	1	4
ALL RADIO STATIONS WERE OFFERED				
SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT WORLD DAY OF PRAYERS ETC.				
HUNDREDS WERE AIRED.				
		TOTAL RADIO SHOWS	<u>6</u>	<u>26</u>
		TOTAL RADIO & TV	99	469

TELE-SPOTS AIRED ON SOUTHERN CAL.
multiply this figure by billboards
in 10 major cities across the U.S.A.
amounting to over 1 million yearly for
R.M.A.

1,008 weekly 5,040 monthly

TOTAL RADIO, TV.,TELESPOTS

1,107 weekly 5,509 monthly

*****These are all aired on free, public service time and are subject
to pre-emption or postponement.

(NON-PROFIT CORPORATION RELATING TO CHURCH, DENOMINATIONS AND AGENCIES)

RELIGION IN MEDIA ASSOCIATION

MARY DORR
Executive Director

P.O. BOX 2164
LOS ANGELES, CA 90051
TEL (213) 481-0340

ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Board Members:

It gives me great pleasure to bring you a report of our accomplishments over the past two years. Compiling this review gave me valuable new insight into our association and its role in the community. I want to share that with you.

As you know, the radio and television networks are required by the Federal Communications Commission to donate public service air-time. And the religious community wants to take advantage of this requirement in order to promote a higher level of moral and spiritual values.

Radio and television networks are multimillion dollar corporations, structured, efficient and profit motivated. In contrast, the religious community operates on a non-profit basis, supported by faithful friends and staffed largely by loosely-knit groups of volunteers.

How can these disparate entities merge their needs? Through the Religion in Media Association. Ours is a peculiarly anomalous position since our function varies, and is dependent upon, the needs and wants of the communication media vis a vis its listening and viewing audience. Our clout, our ability to perform and operate, depends solely upon fostering and maintaining the goodwill and support of both groups. We act as a buffer zone. We are besieged by those with axes to grind, ideas to share or talent to sell. Our job is to mollify, appease and propitiate. Our task is to weigh, balance, harmonize and please all factions. Cooperation and conciliation is the key to success.

Unquestionably then, Religion in Media is a public relations organization of unparalleled dimension and scope whose efforts are geared not to one client with one point of view, but to thousands upon thousands of clients with an equal number of viewpoints.

Therefore, the essential ingredient in generating interest, enthusiasm and support for our work consists of constant exposure and interaction within the community around us. An introduction may lead to a donation; another may supply talent for an award-winning program. Like ripples in a pond, an ever-widening circle

(NON-PROFIT CORPORATION RELATING TO CHURCH, DENOMINATIONS AND AGENCIES)

-2-

of friends promotes our growth and influence. The following figures indicate our activity in this area.

SPEECHES -- Featured speaker at convention/luncheon/banquet.

	<u>CHURCH GROUPS</u>		<u>CIVIC GROUPS</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>
1975	25	7595	26	3210	51	10,805
1976	23	4885	28	5875	51	10,760
Total	48	12,480	54	9085	102	21,565

But community involvement is more than headlining a program from the rostrum. Bonafide membership in organizations such as Soroptomists, American Women in Radio & Television, Greater L.A. Press Club, P.E.O., Business & Professional Women's Club, T.V. Academy of Arts & Sciences, AFTRA, etc. means whole hearted support of their activities and attendance at their functions. The following indicates my activity as an ambassador for Religion in Media.

1975 -- 28 public appearances before 8250 persons.

1976 -- 35 public appearances before 8770 persons.

Total -- 63 public appearances before 17,020 persons.

From that widespread foundation of support comes the small group or individual who is willing to donate his time and money. So the next step is a multitude of small meetings or conferences with those who can meet our constant need for new material, new ideas, new talent and new ways of educating, entertaining and inspiring our viewers.

1975 -- 129 appointments were held with 729 persons.

1976 -- 103 appointments were held with 431 persons.

Total -- 232 appointments were held with 1160 persons.

The larger figure for 1975 reflects the problems inherent in the transition from one administration to another. Prior commitments were honored. New directions and new goals were established.

All of the above speeches, public appearances and conferences reflect activity in the public sector alone. Solicitations and production meetings with the media are almost impossible to categorize. Contact in this area is maintained through phone calls and messages on an almost daily basis. Meetings are frequently unscheduled and relationships operate on a when-available, need-to-know basis.

-3-

Religion in Media's public service is not solely church oriented. Believing in the concept of leadership by exampleship, we try to bring before the camera outstanding members of the community who are actively involved in Christian outreach of one kind or another. All those who have an education and enlightening message--from crisis centers and clinics to authors and artists--are welcomed as participants. Their work is publicized and everyone benefits from the extended knowledge. The list of those who have had that opportunity to share their work and inspire others is a long one.

Figures are available only for those who have appeared on our own Religion in Media produced television programs.

<u>CATEGORIES</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Churches	23	33	56
Schools	18	24	42
Business/Professional	23	40	63
Art/Culture	23	22	45
Authors	6	12	18
Government	11	10	21
Musicians/Singers	5	124	129*
Civic/Welfare Groups	25	22	47
TOTAL	134	287	421

*The very large increase in this figure reflects the growing demand by the television industry for more variety and more entertainment in an effort to capture and keep the viewer's attention. The simple talk-show format has become outmoded. Musicians, singers, dancers, slides, films, visuals of all types and descriptions are now needed. This development in audience demand has made programs more sophisticated and complicated--hence more expensive and time consuming to produce.

The end result of this massive amount of public contact is quality programs filling public service time on radio and television.

-4-

RADIO -- Program time varies from 5 min. to halfhour, or 2 hours..

	<u>DISTRIBUTED</u>		<u>CO-PRODUCED</u>		<u>PRODUCED</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>
1975	25	26	71	120	212	93	335	239
1976	234	41	60	120	264	98	558	259
TOTAL	286	67	131	240	476	191	893	498

RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS -- Easily overlooked till quantified, this has become an area of significant achievement. These "spots", 20,30, 60 seconds in length covered a wide range of community topics such as the Literacy Campaign, Sunrise Services of the Hollywood Bowl and Marine Land, the Lutheran Pageant and the Methodist Convention. Since these spots are aired solely at the discretion of the individual station, the following figures can only be estimated on the basis of the number and quantity of mailings.

1975 -- 1100 aired by 220 stations totaling 18 hours.

1976 -- 5000 aired by 220 stations totaling 83 hours

TELEVISION -- Halfhour programs. No commercial breaks.

	<u>DISTRIBUTED</u>		<u>CO-PRODUCED</u>		<u>PRODUCED</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>
1975	304	152	158	109	65	32½	527	293½
1976	559	279½	159	79	109	54½	827	413
TOTAL	863	431½	317	188	174	87	1354	706½

TELEVISION DEVOTIONALS -- Two/three minute prayers to open and close station activities.

	<u>DISTRIBUTED</u>		<u>CO-PRODUCED</u>		<u>PRODUCED</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>HRS.</u>
1975	--	--	--	--	3640	182	3640	182
1976	260	13	3640	183	365	12	4265	207
TOTAL	260	13	3640	182	4005	194	7905	389

-5-

NINE RELIGION IN MEDIA PRODUCED TELEVISION PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN NOMINATED FOR EMMY AWARDS! Results have not yet been announced, but considering the volunteer and amateur nature of most R.I.M. program participants this is an exceptional achievement.

A further footnote is important:

RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS ARE NOT MANDATORY IN THE ALLOTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AIR TIME. Unquestionably the demands of the viewer play a part in this determination. We are competing with such subjects as nutrition, consumerism, ecology, education--any topic at all that can be construed as being in the public interest.

* * * * *

A number of factors made the foregoing achievements possible. We have the strongest and most active Board of Directors in our history. Their unstinting support and encouragement has advanced our cause immeasurably.

Our financial situation has become increasingly stable. I'm happy to report that a growing number of individual wellwishers have made substantial contributions. Church support remains constant. And several foundations found our work worthy of recognition and endorsement.

Another dramatic highlight of 1976 was the October 14 banquet in the Universal Studio Commissary. An over-flow assembly of 350 friends of R.I.M. heard the exciting announcement of an awards program to be initiated in 1977. This national and local media event will be known as the HALO AWARDS. The presentation ceremony will be the feature of our annual banquet in October of 1977.

I hope it has become apparent that Religion in Media is, without qualification, an extraordinary association. In the past two years we have built a firm foundation within the community. Momentum has been attained and is increasing. The opportunities are great, but the needs are commensurate. We have motivation, enthusiasm and know-how. The stage has been set and lighted. We need money to "start tape".

Mary Dorr

MARY DORR
Executive Director